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Memories
of
An Old Collector

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An Old Collector

By

Count Michael Tyskiewicz

Translated by

Mrs Andrew Lang

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY
1898

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE 'Notes et Souvenirs d'un Vieux Collectionneur' appeared originally in the 'Revue Archéologique,' and have since been published as a *brochure* by M. S. Reinach (Ernest Leroux). To both these gentlemen the thanks of the Translator are due for their courtesy in permitting her to undertake the work.

LONDON: *Sept.* 8, 1898.

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MEMORIES

OF

AN OLD COLLECTOR

CHAPTER I

I SPENT the winter of 1860–1 in Egypt, making excavations in Sakkara, Karnak, and Thebes, and acquiring at the same time two collections at Cairo, the most important of which was in the possession of Dr. Meymar. I was anxious to select something out of all these beautiful works of art to present to the Boulaq Museum, and finally decided on a splendid full-length statue in basalt of a young man dressed in a *schenti*. This was afterwards sent,

with other notable works, to the Paris Exhibition of 1867, where I had the pleasure of seeing it once more, and for the last time, since two years later, in 1869, when I revisited the Museum at Boulaq, the statue had disappeared completely without leaving any traces behind it!

In the spring of 1861 I returned to Paris, bringing with me a large number of cases filled with antiquities of various kinds. When I had unpacked and arranged them all, I invited M. de Rougé and M. de Longperier to inspect my collection. They came and, after closely examining the objects spread before them, pointed out several that were not to be found in the galleries of the Louvre, and ended by complimenting me on my industry and good fortune, and by proposing to buy these works of art for the National Museum. This I declined, but offered them the entire collection as a gift.

The following morning men arrived

from the Louvre to pack and remove the contents of the cases.

Now during my stay in Egypt it had been my daily custom to keep notes relating to my purchases and excavations, intending at some future time to make a book of them, illustrated with engravings of anything that was interesting. Soon after making the gift to the Louvre, of which I have spoken, I took up my residence in Paris with a view to having photographs executed of the most important works, and to this end I addressed myself to M. de Longperier in order to obtain the required permission, and was referred by him to M. de Rougé. On sending up my card to M. de Rougé, I was told that he could not (or would not) see me. The next day I returned a second time, but the moment that I took out my card, the servant replied curtly that his master was not at home. I had, however, no intention of being put off in this manner, and merely remarked that I could remain

in M. de Rougé's rooms until he came in; but the man declined to allow me to do anything of the sort. Provoked at this discourtesy, I informed the Cerberus that I should sit on the staircase and await his master if I had to stay there all night, and carried out my threat while the man slammed the door in my face. In a few minutes the master of the house, finding that the menace was no idle one, sent a message that he would see me, but answered my request with an abrupt refusal, declaring that it was contrary to all regulations, though everybody knows that the public are allowed to draw and photograph in the Louvre as much as they choose under the surveillance of the officials.

The rudeness of this eminent *savant* impressed me even more disagreeably than it might otherwise have done, as during the whole of my relations with the keepers of the Louvre and of the National Library I have never, with

this one exception, received anything but politeness and kindness at their hands.

The Medals from Tarsus [1]

One lovely spring day, when I happened to be in Paris, I received a visit from a dealer in antiquities, who told me that he had seen in a jeweller's shop in the Palais-Royal some Orientals who were exhibiting a set of large gold medals. At this time I was making a collection of Roman medals, and had secured several that were very rare and even unique; so at this news I hurried off to the jeweller, accompanied by the dealer. When we explained our errand, the jeweller informed us that the Orientals had taken their departure the night before, and that he was quite at a loss to know where to find them. In despair at this news, I could think of nothing but to despatch the dealer to make

[1] Longperier, *Œuvres*, ed. Schlumberger, t. iii. pl. iv.–vii.

inquiries as to their whereabouts, and to inquire myself if MM. Rollin and Feuardent could throw any light on the matter. M. Feuardent, it turned out, had seen the medals, and gave me a most enthusiastic description of them, adding that, besides the four large examples, there were some smaller articles in gold, forming part of the same lot. But unluckily he, too, was ignorant of the address of the owners. I returned sadly home, where I found the dealer awaiting me with the joyful intelligence that he had at last discovered that the Orientals were living in a furnished house at Bellevue ; and the following morning we again set forth on our quest, only to find that the Oriental merchants had received a letter from the British Museum, and had already started for London. Thinking the affair quite hopeless, I swallowed my disappointment as best I could.

A short time after this I happened one day to look in on MM. Rollin and

Feuardent, to whom I confided the story of my woes. I then heard from M. Feuardent that the Orientals had come back from London, because the British Museum authorities had declined to give a definite answer till the English Consul had instituted some inquiries at Tarsus, the spot where the medals had been found, and the dealers, impatient of the delay, departed at once to Paris. M. Feuardent further stated that they were resolved not to split up the collection, but to sell it all together. They had agreed to accept the offer made by M. Feuardent for the jewels, but only on condition that he should also take the four medals, at a price of 50,000 francs. This he refused to do, and that very evening the Oriental merchants started for their native country. My house being situated in the suburbs, there had been no time to communicate with me.

My disappointment at this second failure can hardly be described; and

seeing that I really took the loss so much to heart, M. Feuardent proposed that, if I cared to give the 50,000 francs for the four medals, he was still prepared to buy the rest of the things, and that he would telegraph to his agent in Constantinople to open negotiations with the owners of the treasure at the moment of their landing, and to tell them that the conditions under which they had consented to part with their treasures in Paris had been finally accepted. I eagerly jumped at this suggestion, and, after a few days of uncertainty, I received a telegram announcing the immediate return to Paris of one of the merchants. This time there was no further difficulty, and I became the happy possessor of the four medals.

A few years later, when my craze for medals had given place to something else, I sold these marvellous works of art to the Collection of Medals (Cabinet des Médailles), where,

with the large medal of Eucratides, they at present form some of the greatest ornaments.

The (so-called) Bronze Bust of Benevento[1]

It was some time in the 'sixties that I first saw this admirable bust in the house of the archæologist, M. Jules Sambon, then residing at Naples, he having just bought it from a rich noble of Benevento. Alessandro Castellani had tried in vain to get it for himself, but Sambon had been wealthier, or more persuasive, and had outbid him. Now this bust, in spite of its name, did not really come from Benevento at all. It was part of the spoils of Herculaneum, and had been given to the Beneventine gentleman by Ferdinand, King of Naples (Bomba).

In my turn I bought the bust from

[1] *Monuments Piot.* t. i. pl. x. We reproduce a photograph of the bust, done at Paris before it was sent to the Louvre.

Sambon, and likewise another Roman one of the later Empire, for both of which I paid 100,000 francs. This second bust, which is not at all destitute of originality or character, is also in the Louvre, in the gallery preceding the Hall of the Bronzes. They were presented to the Museum by the Emperor Napoleon III., to whom I sold them, together with some other bronzes, a few years after. The origin and history of the second bust are quite unknown to me, but I can confidently state that at the time I parted with the Beneventine bust the eyes were not hollowed out, as they are to-day, but filled with a white substance. And this is clearly to be seen in the old photograph here reproduced.

The Mirror in Relief with Aphrodite Pandemos [1]

A splendid tomb was lately discovered at Palestrina, and all the

[1] *Monuments Piol.* t. i. pl. xx.

plunder was carried off to Rome to be disposed of. I had the good fortune to be present at the unpacking, and instantly made an offer for the two best pieces of the whole collection, the mirror in relief (Aphrodite Pandemos) and another much larger one, representing Dionysos riding on a panther. The first was included in the set of bronzes I sold to Napoleon III. with the boy's head. Of the second I will speak in the next paragraph.

The Hercules of Foligno [1]

During the last six years of the reign of Pius IX., M. François Martinetti occupied the first place among Roman dealers in antiques. His perfect honesty, his knowledge, and his singular cleverness in cleaning bronzes and coins have remained a proverb up to our own days.

[1] Musée du Louvre. Inédit (planche xii.). Martinetti died at Rome on October 31, 1895, regretted by all those who had the pleasure or advantage of knowing him.

All lovers of antiquities who lived at Rome, *savants*, archæologists, and dealers, were in the habit of meeting at the Negozio Martinetti, where many delightful hours were spent in talk about recent excavations. J. B. de Rossi, Father Garrucci, the learned Germans of the Institute, were frequent guests at the Negozio, and during the long and animated discussions, in which he always bore a chief part, the master of the house would quietly continue his work of cleansing some fine bronze from its oxidised impurities.

One day Lovatti, the lawyer, took the lead in the conversation, and related the issue of a long trial between M. Guardabassi, a rich landowner of Perugia, and M. Bonichi, the Roman dealer, who had lost his case. The cause of dispute was this. Bonichi, taking an archæological tour, stopped at Foligno, and saw, somewhere in the outskirts of the town, a beautiful

bronze leg in the hands of a peasant. He questioned the man as to how he had come by it, and whether nothing more had been, or could be, found in the same place, and the peasant then confessed that the rest of the statuette had also been dug up, but was appropriated by a friend living at a little distance. Thither Bonichi hastened as fast as his feet would carry him, but unluckily the man had gone away for some days. The wife, however, at once produced the *torso* of the Hercules when asked for it, which only needed the leg belonging to the other peasant, as well as the other foot and lower part of the leg, to be quite perfect. It was remarkable for beauty and delicate work, and wonderfully well preserved; but, unluckily, the husband was out, and the wife did not like to dispose of it without his consent, nor even to put a price upon it. So Bonichi reluctantly took his departure, leaving the woman enough

money to telegraph to him at Rome as soon as her husband came home, stating the sum he asked for the bronze. He also took care to seek out the other peasant, and bought the leg in his possession without delay.

Returned to Rome, Bonichi waited in vain for news from Foligno. At length he could contain himself no longer, and set out for Foligno, where he heard with pain that the torso had in the meantime been sold to M. Guardabassi, the famous collector of Perugia. Greatly provoked at the loss of the coveted treasure, the Roman archæologist proceeded to bring an action against M. Guardabassi, ostensibly based on the few paoli given by him to the peasant woman, which, he argued, was earnest money. The lawsuit dragged along for several years, but in the end was decided against Bonichi. This verdict so irritated the archæologist that he refused all the offers of M. Guardabassi, who would

gladly have bought the missing leg of his Hercules for a large sum.

I was much amused by this story, and determined that somehow or other I would contrive to get hold of both parts of the statuette. I began by calling on Bonichi, at whose house I had already seen the leg, though the question of price had never been mentioned between us. Now, when I touched on the matter, the dealer plunged into a long story, which was invented on the spur of the moment. He had found, he said, this leg when he was digging a hole for a tree, in a vineyard of his own near Naples, and, as he hoped one day to discover the rest, he did not wish to part with it. I then related the main facts of his law-suit with Guardabassi, and, seeing I was so well informed, Bonichi did not attempt any further concealment, but confessed that he was particularly unwilling to part with the leg, lest it might one day

fall into the hands of his rival. I could only break his resolution by paying down 100 scudi, and by passing my word of honour that I would never sell the leg either to Guardabassi himself or to anyone who was likely to be in communication with him.

But the most difficult part of the transaction was yet to come, and the first step was to write to Lovatti, the lawyer, a friend of Guardabassi's, who had shown him his Hercules at Perugia. Lovatti advised me to tempt Guardabassi by an offer of exchange, for as he was a very rich man, and a passionate lover of all works of art, he would certainly never consent to part with his prize for money only. The lawyer even had the great goodness to say that he would undertake the negotiation himself.

Acting on this suggestion, I passed all my collection in review before me, and decided on sacrificing my mirror from Palestrina, with Dionysos in re-

lief, seated on a panther. It was a magnificent thing, and entirely vanquished the hesitations of Guardabassi. To my great joy, the statuette was at length my own, and I was able to have it put together by Martinetti, who fixed the right leg on to the body and reconstructed the lower part of the left and the foot—both missing since the discovery of the bronze—placing the whole on an antique base. I then took it to Paris, and it was included among the collection that I sold to Napoleon III.

Some time after, being on my way to Egypt, I stopped for the night at Foligno. On my way to the station next morning I happened to see in the shop window of a tobacconist and wine merchant the foot and part of the leg of my Hercules, which Martinetti had been forced to re-cast in bronze. I bought the precious fragment and sent it to the Louvre, where it may now be seen beside the statue, for it

was not thought advisable to meddle with the modern foot. But what is still more curious is that in the year 1894 Martinetti told me that he had in his possession the club of Hercules, which had been found not long before in the same place as the statuette, and I have the pleasure of announcing, before I finish my account of this interesting discovery, that this fourth fragment, which has been most kindly presented to me by the son of Martinetti, has rejoined its three companions, collected by so strange a series of accidents, in the Louvre.

Intaglios and Cameos

To be able to gauge accurately the worth of engraved gems, other things are necessary besides mere hard work: it is pre-eminently a question of instinct, which cannot be acquired, but must be born in a man; and if he happens to be without it, nothing

can ever take its place. For example, in the year 1865 the famous dealer Alessandro Castellani was entirely destitute of any knowledge of archæology, but his natural instinct with regard to all matters pertaining to works of art was such that in a very few years he had become one of the best living judges of objects that dated either from ancient times or from the Renaissance. But, strange to say, in spite of this wonderful gift, in spite of the extraordinary refinement and delicacy of his taste, he never succeeded in acquiring any real knowledge of gems; and, though thousands of them passed through his hands, he was up to the end always taken in, not only by artistic imitations of the sixteenth century, but even by very inferior copies of modern days.

But even those fortunate persons who have been endowed with the necessary *flair* must cultivate their gift in the proper way, and that not by

studying impressions, or, worse still, drawings, but in handling the stones themselves. And it is needful to remember that hours wasted over engravings of gems may in the long run result in the blunting of the instinct, for even the very best of these engravings (I am not here speaking of photography) are not really worth anything at all. It is only when these are set completely aside that the eye and the judgment regain their accuracy.

The principal points for the artist to consider are the subject, the style, the substance, and the form given to the stone. But the connoisseur must not trust to the power of his own eyes only; he must employ a strong magnifying-glass to enable him to examine closely the workmanship of the gem, as well as the parts which are highly polished and those with a dead surface, the portions of the stone both back and front which are not engraved at all, the wear occasioned by the use,

more or less prolonged, of the seal in ancient times, and the relative wear of the deepest part of the intaglio and that of the edges. All these things must be conscientiously studied and carefully weighed.

The gems of the sixteenth century may easily be recognised by their style and by their subjects, both characteristic of the epoch that produced them; but some imitations made in the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth are very difficult to detect. Not only did the artists of this period—many of them really great men—faithfully copy the antique, but they discovered methods of wearing away the stones so that their authenticity could never be suspected. Still, the hardness of the contours, a certain want of breadth in the handling, and the *uniform* wear of all the parts, are so many sure guides to the real connoisseur. Not that, as a rule, he would be capable of explaining his

reasons one by one. He just receives a general impression, more convincing to him than any number of arguments.

While we are on this subject, I should like to say a few words about the large aqua-marine in the Cabinet of Antiquities representing Julia, the daughter of Titus, engraved by Evodos,[1] of whose authenticity I had many times expressed my doubts. Quite lately, thanks to the courtesy of M. de la Tour, I was able to examine it with an excellent magnifying-glass, and out of its mount, with the result that, though my previous scepticism was not entirely overthrown, it was, at all events, severely shaken. For one thing, I was totally unable to verify the earlier impressions of the gem, which, according to M. Furtwaengler, are slightly different from those of later date. Yet it is important that this should be proved beyond dispute, as it

[1] See the bibliography and history of this gem in the *Pierres gravées* of M. S. Reinach, p. 168.

would then be possible to admit that the original—broken or stolen—had been replaced by a copy mounted in the old setting. But, however that may be, my most recent examination convinced me that neither the style nor the engraving afforded any grounds of suspicion. The wear of the edges of the engraved parts looked authentic, though that is a matter which can be easily imitated; what was more disquieting was the wear of the back of the stone, and, above all, of the surface, polished and not engraved, round Julia's bust. The polish is overlaid by rubbing, which incontestably is artificial; and the polished surfaces are scratched, plainly not accidentally, but deliberately and clumsily. However, in spite of this, my mind is still not made up, for the shape of the stone is a powerful argument in its favour. This huge aqua-marine is very thick, and its oval form is by no means perfect; if the lower part of the oval is

irreproachable, the upper part is not, because some defect in the material has forced the cutter of the gem to give it towards the top a double curve, which is slightly heart-shaped. Now, at the date of Titus an aqua-marine of this form must have been extremely rare, and it is quite conceivable that the artist preferred to leave the curves rather than diminish the thickness of the stone. But in our own days an aqua-marine of this size, though not very common, is not at all unheard of, and the modern artist who had copied the bust of Julia from an impression would not have left the imperfection of which we have been speaking, but would have lowered the plane of the upper part of the stone. Still, in my judgment, it is only the comparison of the old impressions with the original gem in the Cabinet of Antiquities that can satisfactorily decide the question.

The aqua-marine of the Cabinet of Antiquities leads me naturally to speak

of the rock crystal engraved by Eutyches and acquired, at the sale of Amilcare Ancona, by the Museum of Berlin.[1] This celebrated stone, described in the fifteenth century by Cyriaco d'Ancona, has since formed part of the collections of the Venetian Admiral Bertuccio Dolfino, of Salviati, of the wife of the Constable Colonna, of Prince Avella, and of Baron Schellersheim. While in the possession of this last gentleman it was broken by the goldsmith Torri, who had it to mount. It then fell into the hands of the Marchese Strozzi, and after his death it was for sale in Milan and bought by Ancona. As M. S. Reinach in his work on gems has quoted my unfavourable opinion of this stone, I think it might not be out of place to give my reasons for saying what I did. My judgment was based on the personal study of a gem which I have

[1] S. Reinach, *Pierres gravées*, p. 169.

many times held in my own hands and repeatedly refused to buy because I considered it a modern forgery. The rock crystal, in spite of its great thickness, had been broken in pieces by blows from a hammer applied to the back of the stone, and traces of the blows may be seen in the aureole of dead surface the size of a coin of fifty centimes. The remainder of the surface, above as well as below, is polished and has no signs of wear. The fragments were stuck together, but there was still one large piece missing and part of the breast of Athene. Finally, when I examined the stone, it was entirely unmounted. M. S. Reinach says in his book that after the gem had been acquired by the Museum of Berlin, M. Furtwaengler himself took it out of its setting and discovered the rest of the word εποιει, whereas in all previous publications only the abbreviation επ had been given. Having myself seen the stone

bare and without its setting (I can recall nothing about an inscription), I was greatly surprised at this assertion of M. S. Reinach's, and wrote to M. Furtwaengler to inquire further. His reply was to send me his article on the gem of Eutyches (published in the 'Jahrbuch' of 1893 [1]), and to give me an exact description of the stone in Berlin. This description convinces me that the stone now in Berlin is *not the same as the one which was offered to me.* The stone which I refused to buy is undoubtedly false; as to the one at Berlin I can give no opinion, for I feel certain that I have never seen it. The breakages of the gem in Berlin are wholly different from those in the gem which was shown me both in Rome and Paris. I do not know where this stone is at present concealed, but it would be very interesting to find it.

The distrust exhibited by amateur

[1] *Jahrbuch des Instituts*, Anzeiger, 1893, p. 100.

collectors in the matter of gems (a result chiefly due to Koehler's publications) has put an end to the fabrication of gems. You may search Europe through and you will never find a single engraver capable of imitating an antique with success. Those that are still produced in a few places are rubbish, and would deceive nobody.

It is much more difficult to distinguish modern cameos from ancient ones. In the nature of things a cameo is bound to wear, therefore the critic is at once deprived of an important test. A clever engraver of our own day who copied a classic subject on a fragment of a cameo equally ancient might easily take in the most experienced experts. When it is a case of a cameo whose history is unknown, I should side with the sceptics.

CHAPTER II

My journey to Egypt, and the excavations I made there, exercised a great influence over my life, for since that time my love of archæology became daily stronger and stronger; and a year after my return I decided to go and live in a country where I should be able to indulge my tastes. So in the year 1862 I bought a villa at Naples, and began without delay to set about making my preparations to dig in the neighbourhood. To this end I consulted one of my friends, M. A. Boret, secretary to the French Consulate, and he, in his turn, introduced me to the Marquis de Gibaut, who was himself arranging to excavate the necropolis of Cumæ. The marquis agreed most kindly to accept me as a partner, and during the following winter (1862–3) we

opened some hundreds of tombs, where we found an immense quantity of painted vases and of various small objects, but nothing especially valuable. Not wishing to waste my time over such an unproductive soil, I broke up the partnership.

Meanwhile I had paid repeated visits to the excavations of Pompeii. This interesting work was progressing very slowly, not more than three or four houses being brought to light in the course of the winter. I therefore proposed to the authorities to undertake *at my own cost* the excavation of an entire district of Pompeii, leaving to the State not only the scientific direction of the digging, and of course the right to any discoveries, but also the choice of the workmen and of their overseers. I only reserved to myself the prerogative of increasing or diminishing their numbers, and that of being present at all their operations. I likewise pledged myself to finish the excavation of the

district either in two, or at most three, winters. But to my great stupefaction my offer was rejected; it was a considerable time before I could ascertain the reason. It then transpired that the State had in its pay a large number of men, some to dig, others to overlook; and it was in the interest of these 'hands' to prolong the work as long as possible, and they by no means desired to have this pleasant state of things upset.

Foiled in this direction, I turned my thoughts elsewhere.

Capua was too far from my villa, and I could not let my workmen out of my sight, so I established myself at Baiæ, the old pleasure city of the Romans, whose villas along the sea-shore and on the banks of Lake Avernus had teemed with every luxury. A second winter passed, filled with my researches, and many ruined villas were discovered, but all bare of any object of art or ornament; nothing but a quantity of

different coloured marble plaques, which had been used to decorate the walls of these splendid palaces. Pillage, or the original owners on leaving their houses, had left nothing to such late comers. I understood that it was useless to linger at Naples, and I put my villa up for sale, and transferred my hopes to Rome, the capital of the ancient world.

Fortune favoured me. The villa was sold to an Englishman, and I hastened to take up my abode at Rome.

Before speaking of my residence in the Eternal City, I must say a few words of Alessandro Castellani, whose acquaintance I had made in Paris in the summer of 1862, renewing our old friendship in the autumn of the same year at Naples, where he contemplated making a home.

At this time Alessandro Castellani was far from possessing the profound knowledge of matters of art that distinguished him later. Together we

began our education, I will not say as archæologists, but as amateurs and collectors. I explored the suburbs and the shops of the dealers, buying recklessly anything that took my fancy. At this period I became more and more fascinated by gems, while Castellani developed a weakness for painted vases. We met daily, and seeing my passion for engraved stones, Castellani proposed to write to his friends and relations in Rome, his native city (from which he had been exiled for political reasons in 1848), begging them to send to Naples all the gems to be found in Rome, which usually overflowed with them. The result was what might have been expected. I was still quite a novice in this branch of art, and Castellani hardly more experienced. In fifteen months I had expended 125,000 francs (5,000*l.*) in gems, two-thirds of them at least being modern—a fact we were both far from guessing. But towards the end of this time my

eyes became a little sharper in detecting the good from the bad, thanks to the counsel of more learned friends, and also from the comparison of the bulk of my acquisitions with a few that were really first class, which, luckily, had been sold me with the rest. Saddened at my own folly, I sold the whole collection to Castellani for the fourth part of what it had cost me, and he, with more sense than I had shown, weeded out the *palpably* false gems, left the doubtful ones (a large number), added some that he had bought at a later date, and ended by selling them all to the British Museum. It was a lesson for me, and a good lesson too. From that time I understood that I must study the science of gems from the very beginning, and I threw myself into it with an ardour which was soon its own reward.

And that was the history of my first collection of gems.

Castellani was a magician who contrived to fascinate the whole world,

even his numerous political adversaries. Though he was not only a Republican but a Democrat (a *Red*, as they said in those days), he set aside his politics when he left his political meetings, and his courtesy and beautiful manners opened wide the doors of the most aristocratic houses. As he had by this time become an expert archæologist, he knew so well how to turn his relations with the 'great world' to account, that in a few years all the treasures of art and antiquity belonging to these noble families had passed through his hands to enrich the private collections of London, where he had many friends. One cannot help asking the question who first found the money for these acquisitions which formed the basis of Castellani's fortune; for he gave a good price, in order to make his name known in Italy, certain that in his turn he would get a better one. Well, the capital of his early purchases was advanced to him by men who knew how

to appreciate his talents and his *flair*, and shared his profits. But that state of things only lasted some months. Soon Castellani had gained enough money to enable him to do without partners, and as the years went on his reputation increased mightily.

I will now leave him for the present. We shall find him again at Rome, following the Piedmontese army in 1870.

The year 1865 saw me established in Rome with a small collection of antiquities I had got together in Naples, which I intended to increase both by digging and by purchase. I had, during the last few years, come into some property which produced a large income, and I proposed to devote this income to the satisfaction of my tastes, especially as the moment chanced to be particularly favourable to collectors.

The Rome of that day was indeed a Paradise for lovers and buyers of antiquities. Under Pius IX. there still

hung about the Eternal City an atmosphere that was almost patriarchal, or even provincial. In many respects you might fancy yourself back in the eighteenth century, and the President de Brosses would have felt perfectly at home in the Rome which he has painted in such vivid colours. The calm that reigned there, the liberty enjoyed by all who did not meddle with politics, the kind and cordial reception given to strangers by cardinals, nobles, and people alike, the quiet and simple life led by everyone, the numberless interests of the place, and its artistic and scientific surroundings—these and other reasons attracted a vast influx of rich foreigners, *savants*, nobles, and sovereigns, who came to pass the winters in the Papal capital. And out of them all the worthy Romans managed to extract a profit.

The worship of antiquities was held in great honour in such a society, presided over by the fostering care of

Baron Pier Ercole Visconti, Director of Excavations and of the Papal Museums, and dispenser of permits to dig, to sell, and to export. Under his paternal administration everything was easy, and done with the best grace in the world. As may be imagined, the dealers in antiquities were numerous and much frequented. Rome at this time was full of gardens, huge villas, unoccupied sites, and vineyards. Outside the walls, more vineyards, market gardens and pastures; while the cultivation of fields and gardens, as well as the buildings now rising in Rome itself, provided abundantly for the daily wants both of seller and buyer. Among the dealers, the cleverest and most looked up to was that Martinetti whom we have just lost, and of whom I have already had occasion to speak in the story of the Hercules of Foligno. Another man much sought after was old Depoletti, whose shop was always full of recently discovered antiquities,

including gems and Roman coins. It was from Depoletti I got a most beautiful and rare medal of Annia Faustina, a sharply cut bronze which to-day forms one of the greatest treasures of the Berlin Museum. Specimens of all sorts were to be found at Depoletti's, even of forgeries, for Depoletti was no expert in matters artistic; he would often ask a large price for some piece of rubbish, and sell something really good for nothing at all. But he was the most honest man in the world, and only deceived others because he was deceived himself. I remember going to see him one day and finding the whole shop full of statuettes and bronzes, not one of which was worth anything. As Depoletti began showing me with pride his latest acquisitions, I could not resist pointing out that it was very singular to come upon a collection of dozens of statuettes which represented in miniature all the most famous statues in Europe.

'Ah, but it is exactly that which constitutes the importance of the find,' replied the old dealer, 'for it is evident that it is the collection of some Roman amateur, who had had reduced copies made for his villa of the best known works.'

I was silent in the presence of such colossal *naïveté*, as without hurting Depoletti's feelings, which I did not wish to do, it was impossible to pursue the argument. I therefore refrained from pointing out to him that in every case the same portions of the frame were lacking in the reductions, which were lacking at the present time in the originals!

In the Via del Babuino lived old Capobianchi. He never had a large number of works of art at once, but all were good, and therefore sold rapidly. One day, while travelling in Sicily, he had the good fortune to acquire a quantity of glass cups of the early Christian era, ornamented

between two thicknesses of glass with gilded subjects and inscriptions. The description of these glasses was published by Father Garrucci and sent to England, where, considering the period, they fetched a good price. To-day, glasses so rare and beautiful would have realised thrice the sum, and few museums possess more than a few scattered specimens. The dealer Abbati occupied himself exclusively with cameos and intaglios, which he really understood, and in which his taste was to be trusted. Commercially, his fault was that he was more an amateur than a dealer, and he put such absurd prices on his gems that he sold few, and was often in distress for money. Then, having set his heart on some fine intaglio, he was forced, in order to raise the required sum, to sell secretly to some one in the trade, one of his most precious gems for half the money which a traveller had previously offered him !

At his death, his ignorant heirs dispersed his collection, which was set up to auction in 'lots of ten or twenty articles, according to size.' Ah, what bargains were got at this singular sale, where everything was given rather than sold! My friend, M. Pauvert de la Chapelle, the finest judge of gems that I ever met, knew how to buy, and to buy well. He had also the luck to be allowed to select, at so much apiece, what stones he liked from the lots which had remained unsold. Only two good gems escaped from this wholesale *execution*, and these the family wished to keep in memory of the deceased; but a few years later they also were sold to M. Pauvert de la Chapelle for a ridiculously small sum.

If I were to attempt to enumerate all the shops of antiquities in the old Rome of Pius IX. the list would be endless. The trade was a good one, and had special advantages, because

there existed in Rome a vast number of depôts where freshly excavated works of art could be bought. At the Villa Massimo, for instance, opposite St. John Lateran, dwelt a certain Checco, who acted as porter. Every morning this little old man took a walk among the neighbouring vineyards, and had a gossip with the owners and their vine dressers. He heard of any discoveries they had made in the course of their work, and he was able to buy whatever he wanted for only a few sous. Any collector, therefore, who called upon Checco at home was sure of finding something in the way of gems or coins. The old man was absolutely ignorant of the value of what he sold, but he had good taste and good luck, and a happy instinct led him to buy the best stones only. His prices were low, although high enough for him to realise a considerable profit, and his door was constantly besieged by all the dealers in Rome, whom for a long time he

supplied largely. At length the amateurs found him out, and offered him prices for his wares of which he had never dreamed, and from that time he always put aside what was best, so that they might have the first choice.

In the Rome of that day, no less celebrated than his namesake, there was another Checco who kept a tobacconist's shop in the Piazza Barberini. Like Checco I., he was a daily visitor to the vineyards beyond the walls, and was kept supplied with antiquities by the peasants who came on Sundays to buy his cigars. Fine gems were his specialty also, and every week his clients provided him with a certain number of excellent stones to dispose of. It was from him that M. Pauvert de la Chapelle bought the cameo signed Diodotus,[1] and many intaglios of rare beauty.

Death carried off both Checcos at

[1] *Jahrbuch des Instituts*, 1889, p. 63, pl. ii. 6. Sardonyx.

very nearly the same time, and with them the trade in gems collapsed completely. It is not too much to say that for a period of fifteen years these two Checcos furnished both dealers and amateurs with the largest number of gems that have ever been taken from the soil of Rome.

Works of art of other kinds might still be had from tradesmen who were in direct contact with the peasants and workmen both in Rome and in the neighbourhood ; as, for instance, druggists, chemists, wine sellers, makers of false jewellery, watchmakers, hairdressers, and the rest. A hairdresser, whose miserable little shop in the Piazza Montanara formed a favourite rendezvous for the peasants on *fête* days, found himself so beset by dealers in antiquities, anxious to sell as well as to buy, that he positively was unable to get light enough to do his proper work. He moved to another street, and, with his exodus, the Piazza Montanara

ceased to be a fashionable resort, and became the desert that it still is, unhallowed by the smallest shadow of antiquity.

At the date of my arrival in Rome the Piazza was enjoying its brief moment of glory. During the week it was as quiet and peaceful as it is today, and only awoke to life on Saturday night, when, after sunset, the workmen returned home. Sometimes small dealers in antiquities would stop them on their way, but as a rule all serious bargaining was put off till the next day. And what a spectacle at dawn on Sunday! Long before the sun rose numbers of these small dealers would take up their positions at the corner of the street through which the peasants must pass on their way to Rome. The Piazza Montanara became the forum of these never-ceasing streams of *contadini*, where they provisioned themselves for the week, and counted on finding buyers for the

tiniest objects they had come upon during their work in the fields.

Before the sun rose the open space was entirely filled, and still the country people kept crowding in. The little dealers were already in their special places, well known to the peasants, but the bigger men did not show themselves in this motley assemblage; they waited in their shops till bargains were offered them.

Later in the day arrived the amateurs and collectors, and in a moment they became the centre of the crowd which poured in upon them from every corner. Agents and dealers exhibited the prizes they had just bought, and trade went on briskly as long as there was anything left to buy. Very rarely did the peasant attempt to sell to a stranger himself; he preferred to employ an agent, who pocketed a large share of the profits. However, a few peasants and workmen, more cunning than the rest, followed the amateurs, and found out where

they lived. They then called on them at home, and as the result of their negotiations was brilliant, their example was followed by others. It was the signal for the first of the defections which ruined the Piazza Montanara.

The approaches to the Piazza were adorned with curiosity shops of the second or third order, and each *negozio* had its own particular *contadini*. In these obscure *negozii* were to be found almost always pupils of the Archæological School of Rome (German Institute of the Capitol), numismatists, and even great Roman dealers. They all kept silent while the shopkeeper made his purchases, but the moment the seller had turned his back, the shop became a perfect little *bourse*, where the bidding was quick and animated. Often, too, things were made more lively by the arrival of a peasant, bearing under his coat a forgery confided to him by some *birbante* of the town, and it was seldom long before he took to his heels

overwhelmed by jokes and chaff. I must confess that in that golden age the forgeries were both rare and bad, for the excellent reason that, antiquities being plentiful, trade in them was not only known and winked at but even encouraged. Ah, what beautiful things have been displayed to view in this Piazza ! What splendid bargains have been concluded here ! I will cite a few instances that have come within my personal experience.

A poor wretch of an unauthorised dealer refused to buy from a peasant a bronze disc with a fine *patina*, but smooth and without ornament, which the man had vainly tried to dispose of. At last, in order to be rid of him, the dealer offered to buy the disc for five bajocchi (about fivepence) and pocketed his acquisition so carelessly that he soon forgot all about it. Then, feeling that his morning had been wasted, he returned sadly home to dinner. On the way he happened to put his hand

in his pocket, and felt the disc, which he took out, thinking of something else all the time, and walked on, mechanically tapping his despised acquisition with his latch-key. Suddenly a tap that was sharper than the rest, caused it to open, and he found that what he had taken for a disc was in reality a round bronze box, the cover having been joined to the box by the effect of the *patina*. The box fell to the ground, and there tumbled out a silver medal, struck in Rome, and bearing the portrait of Hadrian, extremely beautiful and exceedingly rare. Trembling with joy, the happy man rushed off to a dealer, who gave him a thousand francs for it, and sold it to me the next day for three thousand!

The large and superb cameo in my collection representing a full-faced head of Medusa, for which I gave a large sum, was sold in the Piazza Montanara for a few bajocchi, the peasant having taken it for the foot of one of those

Roman chafing dishes (*scaldini*) which are generally ornamented with a human face, and are very common in the huts of the peasants in the outskirts of Rome. The very rare and huge silver medal of Priscus Attalus was also sold for a few sous, for the peasant thought it was merely lead, and the buyer's conscience was not tender. It was not long before he parted with it to Martinetti for several hundred francs, and Martinetti sold it to me—making me pay its real value.

CHAPTER III

One day, when I returned home from visiting the Piazza Montanara, I found awaiting me in my ante-room a peasant who was in the habit of bringing me any works of art that he had dug up. This time he showed me a large paste gem, cut in intaglio, representing the head of Juno in profile. I had never seen such fine paste, and if, instead of being glass, it had been stone, no more precious gem would have been known. I asked the price ; it was thirty francs. Now the paste was really worth several hundreds of francs, but I took care not to conclude the bargain without beating him down, as I knew well by experience that I should only risk losing the object. So I offered twenty francs, and after some hesitation, and many

'false exits,' the peasant handed me over the paste. I had no intention of cheating the poor wretch, but I had to wait for a propitious moment, which was not long in presenting itself.

A short time after, the same man came back with a large bronze medal, of a very common kind and in bad preservation, not worth more than two or three francs at the outside. I took the medal to the window with an air of great solemnity, examined it through a magnifying-glass, and finally inquired the price. It was the same as that of the paste. I continued to examine the medal, consulted my books, and ended by declaring—to him who knew nothing of the subject—that I could not reconcile it to my conscience to buy for thirty francs that object that was worth a much larger sum ; in short I offered to give him 300 francs. He was speechless with astonishment, then seized his medal and was out of the room in a flash, leaving me dying with laughter. The

next day I heard from the dealers that my friend had gone from shop to shop and from amateur to numismatist offering the medal for 500 francs. Of course everyone laughed in his face, and said they would give him ten sous, or even less. At last, after some days, the runaway came back to me, his tail between his legs. Without making any allusion to his freak, he told me that he had been obliged to consult his wife, who was in the country, about the matter, but as she had given her consent, he should be very glad to accept my offer, and had brought the medal with him. I counted out the money, and he went away convinced that he was dealing with a madman. After that he was always coming to me, offering me everything he picked up. But his luck had changed, and he never found anything else that was good.

During the short period of the palmy days of the Piazza Montanara, no

bronze statues of any size, or marbles of any sort, were ever sold there. These were seldom met with save at Ostia or such places, where the excavations were undertaken by the Papal Government. There was little building going on in Rome, and the few constructions undertaken by the State—such as tobacco factories or the railway station—exposed to light a great many small objects of antiquity, but no large sculptures. Some accidental discoveries—as, for example, the colossal Hercules in gilded bronze exhumed in the Palazzo Righetti—were acquired by Pius IX. for the Vatican Museum, but no statues were for sale in Rome. On the other hand, there was an immense number of small objects, and especially medals, some of them exceedingly valuable. In the course of one winter only, without speaking of other purchases, I bought from Depoletti the splendid large bronze medal of Annia Faustina, the *almost* unique gold coin

of Caius Cæsar, the *aureus* of Diadumenus, and the *quite* unique gold coin of Fulvia.

But I was not content with what I could find in the shops of Rome. As soon as I was settled in my new rooms I set about making arrangements to dig on my own account. My friend, A. Bovet, had, like myself, just left Naples, and had been nominated secretary to the French Embassy in Rome. Our friendship was cemented by a love of archæology, and we decided to collaborate in our excavations. Our way was smoothed by another and very influential friend, the Baron Pier Ercole Visconti, Director-general of Museums and Excavations under his Holiness Pope Pius IX.

One of the most picturesque walks in Rome is without doubt the Appian Way, with its avenue of tombs, where one can still fancy oneself back in the old world. No modern building breaks the charm of the road, which stretches

away, bordered for some distance by ruined tombs and mausoleums.

The majestic landscape of the Roman Campagna, so poetical in its silence and solitude, laps the spectator in a sort of gentle melancholy. The only meeting he has to dread is that with a band of *forestieri* who, Murray in hand and opera-glass in case, noisily display their 'modernity' on the classic pavement of the Roman republic. Everything around speaks of the glorious past, of the great men who have traversed this famous spot; everything also suggests researches into the secrets of their buried houses and of their tombs. It was here that I resolved to begin.

The Appian Way had, during many centuries, been a prey to exploration, and in order to ensure virgin soil, it was needful to leave the city gates far behind us. I made acquaintance with the prior of a Roman convent, who possessed a large property bordering

on the Appian Way, beyond Casal-Rotondo. Without much difficulty a contract was drawn up, by which I was bound to deliver up either a third of the objects excavated, or else their value, to be decided by an expert. The Baron Visconti sent me at once a verbal permission to begin my excavations, without waiting for a formal document, whose production was certain to be a matter of time. Meanwhile, my friend Bovet had collected all the implements necessary, and engaged fifteen professional diggers, headed by a *corporal*, with an excellent superintendent accustomed to this kind of work.

The excavations began. Every morning I left Rome before dawn, and passed my whole day at the place where they were digging. Excavation is easy and, indeed, pleasant in the neighbourhood of Rome, owing to the nature of the soil, for the layers covering the ancient earth are very thin, varying from about twenty to sixty inches in depth, while in

the town they are at least ten yards in thickness, and often attain a depth of thirty-three or even of thirty-seven yards. You work in the open air, instead of being buried in a deep, dark trench, which the lightest shower compels you to leave. It is needless to add that it is much easier to overlook the workmen when the excavations are near the surface. For these workmen, mostly natives of the Sabine country, have an amazing gift for stealing the works of art which they discover, even under the eyes of the superintendent himself. By means of a sharp tap of one of their implements they know how to make a gem which they perceive lying at their feet jump straight into their mouths. If the surveillance is not very strict, the man calmly stoops and picks up the object, and if it happens to be too big for his pocket, hands it to a comrade who conceals it in the rubbish heap, from which it is withdrawn at nightfall.

To prevent this I made a rule which I would recommend to other people in similar circumstances. I informed my workmen that I would give them a premium on every object found by them which I considered of any value, and the others I would leave to the finders. I added that a register would be kept of all these small gratuities, and the total divided between the diggers (whether they had been lucky or not) when the week's wages were paid. The system worked excellently, for each man watched the others, and as I also gave special gratuities for the discovery of large works of art that could not be hidden, and was likewise generous with my cigars, I was comparatively well served, at least as long as I presided over the excavations myself. The moment I absented myself, things went differently, as will be seen later.

During the first few weeks little was excavated except miserable tombs, tanks, and tumbledown or pillaged

dwellings. In spite of these disappointments I remained deeply interested in the diggings, for hope is everlasting, and every stroke of the pickaxe has its echo in the breast of the digger, with the wild expectation that the presence of a statue is about to be revealed to his longing eyes.

One day, when we were breakfasting about mid-day, a shepherd, whose flock was grazing hard by, came timidly up and asked if he might speak to me; he then confided to me with a mysterious air that he could show me a spot where a treasure had been buried. Stung by a smile which I could not repress, he assured me that he was absolutely certain of the truth of his statement, *for he had dreamed about it several times.* We gave him some food, a glass of wine, and a few coppers, and sent him back to his sheep. I thought, of course, we had done with him, but day after day he returned to the charge! To get rid of him once

and for all, I told him to take me to the sacred spot, which was distant about a mile and a quarter from the place where we happened to be, and on the convent lands. Nothing was to be seen on the surface, neither ruins nor débris of any kind. I agreed to leave a couple of men to dig for four or five days, and took my departure. The following day, being summoned to Naples on business, I left the direction of affairs to my superintendent, from whom I received a telegram two days after my arrival, saying that at the place pointed out by the shepherd they had unearthed the arch of one of the cupolas of a temple, which had fallen all in one piece, covering a considerable space ; below this, they had caught a glimpse of the base and lower parts of several statues. Work had been suspended till my return.

But a short time elapsed before I found myself in the train, and next day at dawn I stood before the broken

temple, and soon discovered, from the serpent entwining the stick which lay at his feet, that one of the statues represented Æsculapius. In order to hasten matters, I put on all the men, who with their picks and pickaxes proceeded to break the crust of flint and cement, about sixty inches thick, which had formed over the fallen arch. It took two days to make a sufficiently large opening to allow of access to the vault, and the shepherd, in a perfect fever of excitement, never removed his eyes from the workmen. At last the hole was wide enough for us to enter, and we ran to the statues. But what a blow awaited us! Up to the level of the edge of the vault every statue was broken, and there was really nothing left of them but what we had been able to see from the outside. The interior of the arch only contained the large fragment of a great marble base, with archaic bas-reliefs, which to-day forms part of my friend Baron Giovanni

Barracco's rich collection. It was a bitter disappointment at the time, but I explained it to myself soon after, when I discovered, near by, a lime-kiln dating back to the middle ages. It was there that the statues had been destroyed which should have ornamented the temple.

But in spite of this disillusion, I did not lose courage. It was suggested to me that I should undertake the excavation of the site of the ancient Falerii, and as it was too far from Rome to permit me to be present in person, I engaged a second set of workmen for the purpose. After making a contract with the owner of the property I despatched my new recruits to the place, under the care of a superintendent who had come to me with the best recommendations, and from whom I was to receive a weekly report. For a whole month these reports were positively distressing ; walls and ruins there were in plenty, but not a single

object of any kind, not even an enamel. At last it dawned upon me that I was being cheated, and I dismissed the workmen engaged at Falerii.

All this time the excavations on the Appian Way were going steadily on, though with rather meagre results, for with the exception of a few mediocre marbles, two or three banal epitaphs, and some small objects of no value, nothing whatever had been found. The weather, however, was lovely, and the days slipped by most pleasantly. In the afternoons we always had a crowd of visitors from Rome: tourists who came to visit the Appian Way, fox-hunters, whom the exigencies of the chase had led to this spot, or people moved simply by curiosity to see how we were getting on. From time to time the King and Queen of Naples visited my excavations, and Baron Visconti, archæologists, or other friends bestowed their company on me. In fact we had nothing to complain

of except occasional rain, which forced us to go under cover in Rome for a day or two. But, luckily, rainy days were rare during the three winters I passed on the Appian Way.

During the third winter we had better luck. In the very first month of our digging season an important tomb was discovered, though it had long since been robbed and desecrated. Beside the mausoleum was a beautiful statue of a headless woman, with a fur-trimmed garment, which can be seen to-day in the Torlonia Museum at Lungara. On one of the outer walls of the tomb was fastened a huge marble plaque, bearing a very long and interesting inscription, which I offered at once to the Vatican Museum.

The building consisted of a central hall with lateral recesses. The coins and sarcophagi had been carried off and broken round about the tomb, and we found some fragments of them which had escaped the lime-kiln. The

first storey was composed of one single chamber, which served as a meeting place for the friends and relations of the dead ; and at the entrance of this chamber we discovered a mosaic in perfect condition, representing a skeleton lying on a bed, above which was written ΓΝΩΘΙ CAYTON.

This interesting 'find' made people stare. Visconti was enchanted, for it was by his advice that they had dug in that particular spot. Knowing that both inscription and mosaic were well worthy of a place in the Roman Museums, I had them valued, paid what was due to the convent who owned the land, and offered the two objects to the Holy Father for the Vatican. The marble inscription was conveyed there without delay. As to the mosaic, Pius IX. desired that for the present it should be left where it was, and, wishing to see it in the place where it had been found, announced a speedy visit to the tomb. But we waited in vain ; the

business of the Council proved too absorbing to the Holy Father, and he could find no time in which to make the expedition. His intention was to have the tomb completely restored, and to replace the inscription now in the Vatican, leaving a guardian to take care of the tomb. Perceiving that time was passing, and that his occupations did not allow of his quitting Rome, the Holy Father issued orders that the mosaic and the tomb should be recovered with earth, so as to preserve them from the feet of any wandering cattle. A few days later it would have been impossible to guess the whereabouts of the buried tomb, as the soil had been turned up over a vast space surrounding it. All this while the excavations had continued with varying results.

But alas ! the poor Pope was destined never to behold the mosaic. It was the year 1870, and after the entry of the Italian army into Rome Pius IX. never left the Vatican. The directors of

archæological excavations under the new government—acting probably on the information of some shepherd—gave orders for the continuation of the work, and guided by the learned Pietro Rosa, who often came to visit my diggings, the workmen ended by bringing to light the tomb and the mosaic, which were sent first to the Kircher Museum and then to the Thermal Museum, where they may be seen to-day.

But to return to our discoveries. One day when I was driven back to town by the rain, I noticed, as I was passing the shop of a worker in marble near the Coliseum, some beautiful marbles, urns, columns, and bas-reliefs. I stopped and questioned the man as to how these sculptures had come into his possession. He told me that he had bought them, with some others which he had already sold, from the owner of the very land where only the year before my men had declared that they could find nothing. With the connivance of the superintendent, they had handed over these things

to the proprietor, by whom they were sold to the marble worker. Some weeks after this, happening to pay a visit to a friend at the Prussian Archæological Institute, I saw some young men cleaning the colossal wing of a bronze Victory which had also been stolen from my excavations at Falerii. I brought an action against the owner, but the events of 1870, and the death of my friend Bovet, who had undertaken the case, caused me to drop it.

Besides these excavations, I set on foot others at Veii and even in some parts of Rome itself, though without much result. Age and rheumatism pressed upon me the wisdom of abandoning the search to younger and more robust men, and of contenting myself with buying and studying the fruits of other people's labour. Apart from this, the new *régime* in Rome did not smile upon amateur diggers; and this chapter of my life was closed for ever in September 1870.

CHAPTER IV

THE entry of the Italian army into Rome (September 1870) led to great changes in the little world of archæologists and amateurs. Not that the new government and the Piedmontese troops occupied themselves with antiquities; ministers and generals alike were absorbed in other matters. But immediately on the surrender of Rome, Castellani, the Alexander the Great of *bibelots*, made *his* entry into the Eternal City, which he had quitted, a respited exile, in 1848. It was a memorable event, and caused profound modifications in the trade of antiquities.

Up to the time of the arrival of this potentate—for in his own way he was nothing less—not a single object passed through the hands of the Roman dealers

which was not offered to me to buy if I cared to become the purchaser. They had formed the habit of doing this and remained faithful to it, for I always made it worth their while. The Roman antiquaries had, of course, heard of the doughty deeds of Alessandro Castellani, but they had never seen him at work, and meanwhile were quite content to give me the first-fruits of their discoveries. This state of things did not please Castellani; he wished to change it, and soon the opportunity presented itself. With his usual cleverness he seized it, and got the better of me all along the line. This was how it came about.

The antiquarian Martinetti had collected together about forty very fine gems. I knew them well but was not tempted to buy them, remembering the disasters attending my first collection of engraved stones at Naples. An official of the British Museum, passing through Rome, saw these gems, and

was interested in them. Soon after, the British Museum requested to see the stones on approbation, and they were sent to London. Martinetti, whose prices were always moderate, asked 17,000 francs (680*l.*); but the British Museum rarely loses a chance to bargain, and the affair dragged on for two years. Meanwhile, my taste for gems having reawakened, it suddenly occurred to me to ask Martinetti to show me his stones, and it was only then that I learnt that he was in negotiation with London. However, he showed me some impressions that he had taken, with which I was so delighted that I begged Martinetti to tell the Museum he must have a definite answer, yes or no—that is, 17,000 francs by return of post, or the stones. It was the stones which came back, and that very day I paid down the 17,000 francs, and took home the intaglios.

It was my custom after breakfast, while I was smoking, to bring out my

gems, and to amuse myself by holding them up to the light, and to take impressions of them. Among those I had recently bought, which were to form the nucleus of a fresh collection, there were fourteen far finer and more valuable than the rest. These I kept in a small box apart, while the others were all together in a larger box. One day I was seated in front of a table looking at my stones—happily at the least precious ones—when in came Alessandro Castellani. 'What, stones again?' he said. 'I thought you had given them up completely.' Then he went on to tell me that the collection of gems was his business and hobby, while with me it was merely an accessory to my other collections. It would therefore be very kind if I would give mine up to him. As we had often done business together before, and I had generally had the worst of it, I mistrusted him, and silently resolved either to keep my stones for myself or to make Castellani

pay dearly for them. 'You must give me 17,000 francs then,' I replied promptly, stating the sum the entire collection had cost me, including the fourteen best stones, which by this transaction I should have got for nothing. To my profound surprise, Castellani, instead of hesitating, overwhelmed me with thanks, carried off the stones, sent me the money, and kept silence about the business. For myself, I have always had a suspicion that Newton, of the British Museum, annoyed at having to return the gems to Martinetti, had written to Castellani, with whom he was extremely intimate, begging him to get hold of them again, whether from Martinetti or anybody else. However that may be, Castellani, returning a few days later, found me again at the window playing with the fourteen remaining stones. At this time Castellani was an amateur of the first water, and it would be impossible to describe the enthusiasm which seized

on him at the sight of my gems. His superlatives were quite endless. In short, he went so well to work, that he again took away all my stones, for which he paid me 30,000 francs (1,200*l.*). Only on this occasion he did not consider silence to be necessary. Having given such a large sum, he thought he might as well get all he could out of his bargain. The day after, Martinetti knew that he had let me have gems for 17,000 francs for which Castellani had paid me 47,000. The news ran like wildfire through all the shops of the dealers in antiquities, and was a death-blow to my reputation. From henceforth it was Alessandro to whom the rarest treasures were offered. A neat trick, was it not? But I did not make myself miserable, for I was no stranger to the extraordinary cleverness of Castellani. If he had not got the better of me this time, he would have done so the next. Besides, I was not altogether sorry to have recouped myself in part

for my losses over the collection of false gems I had made in Naples.

Such was the lamentable result of my second attempt to form a cabinet of gems.

In order to finish with the subject, I will now relate how I set about my third collection of gems, which I have at present in my possession. Again I owe it all to chance. Shortly after my 'deal' with Castellani, I heard from a friend who always has the last intelligence of any antiquities, that an Italian nobleman, recently arrived in Rome and having instant need of money, was ready to dispose of a large and important collection of cameos and intaglios, which had been in his family a long time and was very famous during the eighteenth century. I opened negotiations, and obtained permission to examine the collection at my leisure. It was extensive, and included some of the very best stones—beautiful cameos,

intaglios of the second rank, and a quantity of sixteenth-century gems, many of them in the ivory and gold settings so highly prized by lovers of Renaissance work. The sum asked was very large, and altogether the affair did not attract me; for this time I had decided not to go in for numbers, but only to collect a few specimens of particularly rare and beautiful gems. I went to consult Martinetti, and proposed to him to go shares with me. We then returned to inspect the collection, Martinetti passing for an expert whom I had called in.

The results of this visit were speedy. In the course of a few days an offer I had made was rejected, as falling far short of the value. Then, fearing the rivalry of Castellani (who knew of the existence of the collection but not the fact that it was for sale), and feeling that my last card would have to be played, I declared frankly that the price I had named was all I was pre-

pared to give, but that, if it was considered insufficient, the collection had better be offered to Alessandro Castellani, who had the reputation of paying higher than other people. In saying this I was well aware that the Italian nobles, when in want of money, prefer selling to a foreigner rather than to a compatriot, and my announcement did not fail of its effect. The bargain was struck on the spot. The gems were divided between Martinetti and myself, and as the excellent Ser Checco was one of my best friends he allowed me to have first choice, and even handed over to me later some good things which had fallen to his share, and for this conduct I shall be eternally grateful to him. I kept the most valuable gems to adorn my new collection, and sent the rest to be sold in Paris.

From about this time the Roman trade in gems ceased altogether. Since the waste lands and vineyards have been built over, the harvest of engraved

stones, once so abundant, has come to an end; therefore, to form a new collection, I was obliged to put myself in relations with the dealers of all the classical countries of the East, and it is thanks to them that I succeeded in obtaining satisfactory results, for Italy, from henceforward, produced hardly anything.

Let us now return to Castellani, who from this date was reckoned the first of European antiquaries, and was to be found wherever antiquities were to be bought and sold.

To the day of his death Castellani knew nothing about the sale of the collection of which I have been speaking, and I, on my part, took good care to say nothing about it, still less to show it to him, as I had made up my mind not to part with the gems. He had several times gone to the town where their late owner had lived expressly to induce the family to allow

him to see the stones, but his request had naturally been politely refused. Seeing that I now bought stones from the East, Castellani altered his tactics, and tried to sell me gems (in which he sometimes succeeded) instead of buying them from me. Often, too, we exchanged our wares, and when it happened that the object I had taken no longer pleased me, and I proposed (with a view to a second deal) to revert to a price originally estimated, Castellani would refuse with a laugh, saying, 'Da baratto in baratto un leon diventa gatto'—in which Castellani was perfectly right.

One day Alessandro showed me a splendid intaglio he had brought from Naples. He absolutely declined to let me have it, declaring that the exceptional beauty of the gem would facilitate the sale *en bloc* of a number of inferior stones which he had collected. Knowing my man, I felt it was useless to insist further.

A few days after, as I was passing through the town, I paid a visit to a poor *frate* in a monastery. This *frate* had dealings with the peasants who lived on lands belonging to his monastery, and it sometimes happened that the country people would bring or send the *frate* any antiques that they came across in their work, which he disposed of for their benefit in Rome. This time I was in luck, for the *frate* brought out a bronze of the most extraordinary beauty, the most wonderful thing of its kind I have ever seen. It represented a young man in a sitting posture (the seat, which was probably a rock, being missing), and must have been part of a bas-relief. This lovely figure was in perfect preservation, and of an astonishing *patina*. The price asked was very low, 2,000 francs (80*l.*). I paid it without bargaining, wrapped up my bas-relief in silk paper, and put it in my pocket. Bursting with pride at my acquisition, I rushed off to Alessandro,

who received me with the words, 'I have a bronze to show you—*such* a bronze!—the most beautiful bronze in the whole world!' So saying, he led me into a room where he kept all his most precious treasures, and displayed a beautiful statuette of Minerva, with the pupils of her eyes made of tiny diamonds. 'Isn't that the most beautiful bronze you ever saw?' he asked, radiant with delight. '*One* of the most beautiful, certainly,' I replied, 'but I *have* seen better. And, what is more, I have a bronze in my possession still more beautiful than yours.' With that I took the *frate's* figure out of my pocket. Castellani became green. He did not attempt to deny the superiority of my bronze, but without loss of time tried to get me to sell it to him. I treated him as he had treated me about the gem, and refused. He offered 20,000 francs (800*l.*); I refused again. In the end I let him have the bronze for 10,000 francs, on

condition he threw in the stone which I coveted.

The bronze was sold by Castellani to the British Museum, and a rather bad engraving of it has been published by Mr. Murray.[1] I am at a loss to imagine why, in the British Museum, this figure is said to have come from Taranto, for it was found in an open field near the Lake of Bracciano. Of this I am absolutely sure.[2]

[1] *History of Greek Sculpture*, vol. ii. pl. xxxiii.

[2] It was Castellani who designated Taranto as the place where the bronze was found, but some years ago the name was changed to 'the Bronze from the Lake of Bracciano.'—A. S. M.

Bronze figure from Lake Bracciano,
now in British Museum.

CHAPTER V

From the time that Castellani re-entered Rome in the wake of the Italian army, and had contrived, by means of the high prices he offered, to attract to himself all the dealers in antiquities to be found in the city, the bosoms of the confraternity were bursting with joy, persuaded, as they were, that their golden age had set in. But their satisfaction was of brief duration, for it was not long before Castellani began to explore on his own account the ancient provinces comprising the Papal States, which for so many years had been closed against him. He established in all parts, even in mountain villages so remote that access to them was only possible either on foot or with a mule, agents carefully trained by himself,

who allowed no interesting work of art to escape them, whether it was found in a church or a palace, in a tradesman's house or a peasant's hut. Guided by their reports, Castellani himself visited the localities indicated, and if he did not close the bargain on the spot, at least established relations with one or two needy people, to whom he promised large commissions in case of success. When, in the course of his travels, he happened to meet with some object that the owner was willing to part with, he would often pay twice its value. The reputation for liberality, which Castellani knew to be money well laid out, was naturally heightened by public gossip; in consequence everyone came direct to the Casa Castellani, which became the target for all who had an antique to sell. The Roman antiquarians were left to bite their thumbs, as the saying is. Castellani had treated them as he had treated me: he had stolen their *clientèle*, not

of buyers but of sellers. Since he appeared they could get nothing. All went to the great Alexander.

In his frequent visits to Paris, and more especially to London, Castellani was to be seen at the public sales, and bought whatever took his fancy, at very high prices. His fame as the king of antiquarians and connoisseur was soon established in America as well as in Europe. As he was known to be very generous the sellers accepted his terms blindly, and Castellani was never at any loss what to do with his acquisitions, for he had contrived, in England more particularly, to form a *clientèle* of very rich men, and any object offered by him for sale was competed for eagerly by the different museums, as if its value had been enhanced by the mere fact that Alessandro had purchased it. From the date of his stay in Naples he had transacted business with the London museums to the amount of several hundred thousand

francs ; and once established at Rome he extended, as I said before, the circle of his commercial relations as well as their value.

Here is an example of the influence that Castellani exercised in England, and over the British Museum in particular. M. S., a Neapolitan antiquarian, finding Castellani such a success in London, determined to follow in his footsteps, and had collected some first-class wares. He went to the British Museum and demanded prices similar to those obtained by Castellani. The answer he received was that he asked a great deal too much. M. S. protested that such was his desire to enter into relations with the Museum that he would sell his works of art for any sum the *Trustees themselves should fix*. It was useless. They would not buy. On his way back to Italy, much discomfited, M. S. stopped in Paris, and by accident he fell in with Castellani, who was

proceeding to London. M. S. called on his illustrious brother, showed him his treasures, without alluding to the fate which had befallen them, and sold them to Castellani for the sum that he had originally asked of the Museum. Eight days after, Castellani himself sold these same things, together with some others, to the British Museum, and naturally obtained a much larger price.

I was told one day that Augusto Castellani, brother of Alessandro, a goldsmith by trade, had bought a *bisellium* in bronze incrusted with silver, of wonderful beauty, and that Alessandro had in vain offered him first 100,000 francs, then 150,000 francs (6,000*l.*) if he would consent to part with it. Much interested, I hastened to the house of Augusto Castellani without delay, and was shown this marvellous throne (literally a 'double seat'), adorned all over with scenes of the vintage, wrought in silver. I

have never beheld anything like it in any museum. My head swam, and, carried away by excitement, I committed the colossal folly of offering 300,000 francs (12,000*l.*) for its possession. Happily for me, I was not more successful than Alessandro. Augusto Castellani displayed a stoicism worthy of an ancient Roman; the *bisellium*, he said, had cost him from 10,000 to 11,000 francs (400*l.* to 440*l.*), and he intended to sell it to the museum of the Capitol for exactly the price he had paid. This fine trait deserves to be quoted, for such acts are always very rare, and seem daily becoming rarer. The city of Rome, duly grateful, nominated M. Augusto Castellani director of the Capitoline Museum, a post which he fills up to the present time.

A Roman is, in general, an extremely superstitious person. Dreams are apt to influence his actions, and he bets at

lotto on the numbers that have haunted his sleep. A certain poor devil, whose whole fortune consisted of a few dozen scudi, dreamed repeatedly that he had found a treasure in the land adjoining the fountain of Egeria, not far from the Appian Way. The estate belonged to the old Prince Torlonia, the millionaire who died recently.

After having carefully counted all his little property, our friend decided to call on one of the Prince's agents, to whom he explained his desire to obtain permission to dig in the place in question. The permission was at once accorded, but subject to the condition that half the treasure trove should belong to Torlonia, and that he should also have the right to buy the half pertaining to the excavator, at the valuation of experts.

Work soon began; the man had only been able to hire two labourers, but he took his turn himself with spade and pickaxe. In a few days he came upon

one of those hiding places called a *gatto* by Roman diggers. This is merely a spot where dishonest workmen, excavating either for the State or for a private individual, put the antiquities or any other treasure they have been able to conceal from the superintendent. Now, it sometimes happens that the labourers, for some reason, have to leave the place without being able to carry off their booty, which then becomes the spoil of their successors. Our friend's *gatto* contained, hidden under a bed of tiles, a statue of Bacchus in the Roman manner, but fine, and quite intact ; a bust, also intact, of an ancient Roman of the first century B.C.; fragments of several other statues ; an ivory statue with traces of colour, representing an actor, and an immense quantity of leaden pipes. These were all transported to the large shops of the Lungara, adjoining the Torlonia Museum, and were visited by the Prince himself. An expert, the

Roman antiquarian Passinati, was sent to estimate the value of the 'find,' which was set down at 6,000 francs (240*l.*). The excavator, enchanted with the expectation of getting half, hastened to the Casa Torlonia to receive what was due to him, but was much disappointed to learn from an *employé* of the Prince that his Excellency did not wish to retain any of the treasures, and that he had better try to find a purchaser who would give the sum stipulated by the expert, which was, of course, to be shared with the Prince.

The friend and counsellor of Prince Torlonia in all that concerned the museum was Visconti, and to him the poor devil went, and implored him to persuade Torlonia to take the works of art. Visconti, who knew his Prince well, held out no hopes of being able to change his mind, but promised to find a buyer, and, as he dined with me twice a week, I was the first person he spoke to on the subject. The

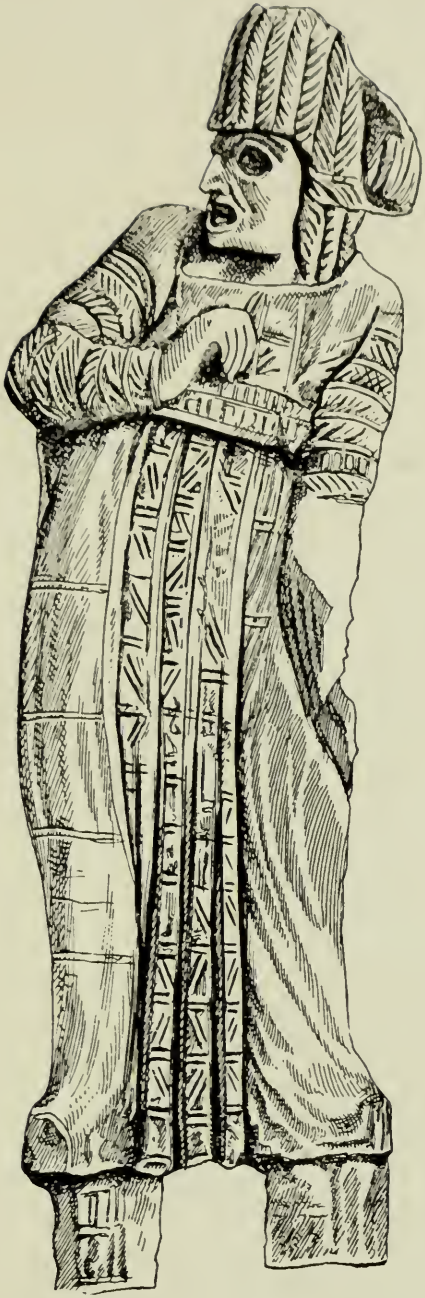
following day Visconti came to fetch me in his *coupé*, drawn by the white horse which had become legendary in Rome and its neighbourhood, and we drove to the Lungara. At the very first glance at the marbles I told Visconti that I considered the estimate of the experts far below the value, and that I should think myself lucky in getting the whole for 10,000 francs (400*l.*). The astute Visconti broke into loud exclamations, and begged me to give nothing of the sort ; it might, he said, offend the Prince, and, of course, I was always at liberty to make the digger a present. In short, I agreed to pay the 6,000 francs asked. His most illustrious Excellency was informed of the transaction, and when he had ascertained that the treasures were really worth the sum at which they had been estimated, ordered 3,000 francs (120*l.*) to be handed over to the excavator, and an account of the whole to be entered in the registers of the Lungara

Museum. I owed Visconti a grudge for twenty-four hours for having used me as a cat's-paw; but this was not all! There still remained to the princely banker to pay the expert for his valuation. M. Passinati was summoned, and declared his charge was one per cent., or sixty francs. Not a sous ever left the Torlonia coffers without the express authorisation of the Prince, and he was therefore informed of the debt owing to M. Passinati. Our Crœsus, surprised at having to pay sixty francs for a valuation which had only lasted half an hour, went in search of Passinati, whom he found waiting in the hall where the treasurer had been placed. Beside himself with rage, he reproached the expert with his overcharge; then, seizing the ivory statuette of the actor from the table, he held it out to Passinati, saying, 'You had better content yourself with this, for you will never get sixty francs.'

Passinati was speechless at his good

fortune, for he recognised the worth of this ivory, though the Prince did not. He hurried off with it to Sambon, the Neapolitan antiquarian, who at once offered him 1,000 francs. Sambon took the ivory to Paris, where a few years later he sold it at a large profit to an amateur. Then comes Castellani on the scene, who, seeing the statuette in the amateur's rooms, gives him 6,000 francs for it, and keeps it till he dies. At the sale after his death the beautiful figure, which has often been reproduced,[1] was bought by M. Auguste Dutuit, in whose fine collection at Rouen it is still to be seen.

[1] See, for example, the *Denkmäler* of Baumeister, pl. lviii. (coloured).



STATUETTE OF TRAGIC ACTOR
In Ivory.

CHAPTER VI

Everyone knows the Villa Albani and its beautiful collection of ancient marbles. This villa, which contains sculptures more magnificent than are to be found in many museums, belongs to the successors of the first Prince Torlonia, of whom I have spoken in the preceding chapter. The only statue in the Albani collection which was not an antique was a bust of the Cibò, done in the fifteenth century, and Alessandro Castellani was clever enough to induce the millionaire Torlonia to sell this to him. I do not know what arguments he may have used, but anyhow Castellani got it for a hundred pounds, and sold it again for a few tens of thousands of francs to the Berlin Museum. Of course it is easy to understand that the

professional dealer in antiquities tried to get a good bargain, and succeeded; but how a man, with an income of millions and a taste for sculpture, could have parted with one of the gems of his collection for a hundred pounds, is more difficult of explanation. Besides, Torlonia has never found any purchaser for the Lungara Museum, which he wished to sell *en bloc* at a reserve price of more than ten millions of francs (=400,000*l.*). The Lungara Museum has some fine statues and bas-reliefs, and, above all, some very remarkable imperial busts, but many of the objects are very indifferent, and it can in no way be compared with the wonderful collection of the Villa Albani, whose walls of porphyry and rare marbles make an admirable setting. But to return to the Cibò bust. Torlonia must have deeply regretted parting with it when he heard what a sum it had cost the Berlin Museum. A friend of mine, M. Pauvert de la Chapelle, who was a

frequent visitor at the Villa Albani and knew the collection better than the Prince himself, noticed the absence of the Cibò bust, and asked the keeper what had become of it. He was told that his Excellency, not liking a fifteenth-century marble to be mixed with his ancient sculptures, had ordered it to be moved to his private apartments. Unhappily, my friend had seen the bust at Castellani's a few days earlier, and therefore knew how much to believe of this statement ; but, in spite of this, he never came to the Villa Albani without inquiring for the bust. One day he found it in its old place—in plaster. Some time after, Torlonia had a marble copy executed, which must have cost him at least as much as what he had got for the original.

An amusing story used to be told in Rome illustrating Castellani's extreme astuteness in selling his wares. I cannot vouch for its authenticity, as all I know of it is from the conversation of

Roman dealers, and most certainly the two actors in this little comedy would never have taken me for their confidant; but, as the anecdote is piquant, I will tell it here. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

Castellani, it is said, had managed to get hold of a superb enamelled ewer, together with the dish on which it stood. Being well acquainted with the fancy of the Rothschilds for objects of this kind, and knowing also that no Rothschild was ever so carried away by his inclinations as to pay more than was strictly reasonable for anything, he began seriously to consider how he should set to work, and soon hit upon a promising scheme.

Baron Adolph was daily expected in Rome. Directly he arrived he paid a visit to Castellani, who hastened to show him all the best things he had. When everything else had been inspected, Castellani drew mysteriously from a cupboard the enamelled dish,

but did not produce the ewer, which was necessary to complete it. Castellani always systematically refused to sell an *isolated* object to an amateur of this importance. He pretended that to separate one rare specimen of work from the remainder of the group was to spoil the whole; the amateur must be ready to expend 100,000 francs (4,000*l.*), at least, on an entire set of objects, or the question was not worth discussing. The Baron naturally found the dish to his taste, and wished to buy it. The customs of the shop being known to him, he agreed to take the rest of the lot, and paid heavily for the whole. Though well pleased with his purchase, M. de Rothschild lamented that there was no ewer to stand on the tray, but the enamel was of so rare a sort that it was hardly to be expected a ewer of the same work should be discovered, and of a shape that would exactly fit into the hollow of the dish. The following day

he left for Florence, where he had taken rooms, and where a host of antiquarian dealers and agents awaited him.

He was scarcely settled in his new quarters when an agent came to call, telling him of an old lady living in the country, not far from Florence, who wished to sell some beautiful majolica. M. de Rothschild went to look at it, but, though the majolica was in truth very fine, it was not fine enough for him. Disappointed at the result of his visit, the Baron prepared to take his leave, but the lady would not let him go. He really must first taste her wine, made from her own vineyard!—and she went to give orders about it. The Baron took advantage of her absence to reproach the agent with having sent him on such a wild-goose chase, striding up and down the room all the while he was speaking. As he happened to draw near a bedroom door which was standing open, he descried

an ewer, which at first sight he took to be a majolica. Over it was a glass shade, on which rested a wreath of *immortelles*. When the lady returned to the drawing-room, the Baron asked permission to examine the ewer, which he had only seen from afar. It was brought, and the reader will easily guess what the ewer was, and how everything fell out. M. de Rothschild thought that he had made a grand discovery in recognising that the enamel was of the same work as that of the dish bought from Castellani, but he wished to be certain that the foot of the ewer would fit into the hollow of the dish. He inquired the price of the ewer. The lady replied that it was not for sale, as it was the only souvenir she possessed of her beloved husband ; so the Baron had to console himself with taking an impression of the foot of the ewer, and went back, feeling rather bored, to Florence. The moment he arrived he had the dish

unpacked, and found that the foot of the ewer fitted it in quite a marvellous way. Then followed a sleepless night and a wretched awakening. The next day the agent was despatched on an embassy to the old lady. He was the bearer of princely offers, but brought back a refusal. The rest of the story does not need telling. The conclusion was inevitable. In the end the widow's pious scruples were overcome.

How Alessandro must have laughed!

Castellani was a great favourite with this M. de Rothschild (he was Baron Adolph, formerly a banker at Naples, but now living at Paris). Taking one year with another, he was sure to have at least two transactions with him, and in one of these I had a share. This was in 1878, when the great retrospective exhibition was held at the Trocadéro. M. S., a dealer in antiquities at Naples, had offered me by letter a gold earring, which was an admirable speci-

men of Græco-Phœnician work, adding a minute description, and naming the price. I agreed to buy it, and told M. S. that I would receive the object from his own hands, for he was intending very shortly to pass through Paris. Directly he arrived he brought me the earring, which I thought very beautiful, but the question of payment presented some difficulties. M. S. was of opinion that he had asked me a higher price than that which I had accepted. The misunderstanding continuing, M. S. left the house, taking the earring with him, and hurried to offer it to M. Edmond de Rothschild, who bought it, if I remember right, for 8,000 francs (320*l.*). It was exhibited at the Trocadéro, and much admired. Alessandro was miserable that such a treasure should have slipped through his hands ; and I, on my side, did not feel satisfied, as may easily be understood. Happily, an event took place which consoled me for my loss. A Russian, from Odessa,

came to see the Exhibition. He showed M. Hoffmann, the celebrated Parisian dealer in antiquities, the photograph of a superb golden diadem, studded with garnets, which he had at Odessa, and was ready to sell for 25,000 francs (1,000*l.*). M. Hoffmann, who was acquainted with my disappointment in the matter of the earring, told me of the Russian's offer, which I closed with immediately. The diadem, which had been discovered, it was said, in the tumulus at Kertch, called Mount Mithridates, was sent for to Paris.

Meanwhile, the Russian heard the story of the earring, and went to the Trocadéro to see it. 'What!' he exclaimed. 'They give 8,000 francs just for an earring, and I have only asked 25,000 for my crown!' And he began to think about the matter. On the other side, Castellani, who heard and saw everything, had wind that the diadem was on its way from Odessa to Paris. He made acquaintance with the

Russian, saw the diadem before anybody else, offered 50,000 francs for it (2,000*l.*), and became its possessor.

All this time I slept peacefully, without the faintest suspicion as to what had occurred. Castellani knew his clients to the bottom. He was fully aware that M. Adolph de Rothschild, though not himself a collector of antiques, must be rather jealous of the earring bought by his cousin, Baron Edmond, and so much admired at the Trocadéro. Therefore, without delay, Castellani took the diadem to the hotel in the Rue de Monceau, where he exchanged it for 100,000 francs (4,000*l.*). The following day all artistic Paris had heard of the affair, and once again I was exasperated at the bad luck which seemed to pursue me. At first I abandoned myself to the gloomiest thoughts, then a consoling reflection presented itself. 'After all,' I thought, 'earrings are usually made in pairs; there must

be another identical with Baron Edmond's. All I have to do is to find it.' Profiting by the fact that dealers, great and small, had deserted Italy for the Paris Exhibition, I went at once to Rome, where I was acquainted with a very clever agent for antiquities. Knowing that the earring had been discovered in a Greek tomb in Sicily, I sent my man over. After stopping at Naples to get information about the people who had sold the earring to M. S., he wrote to me from Sicily to say that at the price of many journeys backwards and forwards, he had succeeded in discovering one of the workmen who had helped to open the Phœnician tomb. From him he learned that my guess was correct, and that a *pair* of earrings had in truth been found, but as the men who had undertaken the excavation were partners, they had divided the spoil, and one partner had sold his treasure in Naples, while the other had returned to Calabria. My

agent added that he was just starting for Calabria in search of the earring.

Some days later, in company with the Calabrian, he knocked at my door, and with what joy did I behold the earring, exactly like its twin in Paris, only more complete, as it was ornamented by a sphinx, which was missing in the other! The Calabrian knew already the price that had been paid for its fellow, and was awaiting the return of Castellani to Naples to obtain from him a sum equal to that which M. de Rothschild had paid. Without a moment's hesitation I gave the man his 8,000 francs, and duly recompensed the agent. Everybody was satisfied, except Castellani, who, when he came back, jumped with surprise at seeing the earring in my hands. His covetousness was on fire, and soon blazed up. It had been so often repeated in Paris that Baron Edmond's earring was worth far more than 8,000 francs, and if this was the case with a single one,

what would not the pair fetch? I had reasons of my own for wishing to be 'even' with Castellani, who always made me pay dearly for my fancies. I kept him waiting for some time, and in the end extracted from him 20,000 francs (800*l.*). Castellani reckoned that a Rothschild, who owned one earring, would stick at nothing in order to get the other, and possess the most beautiful pair of jewels in the world. So he wrote at once to Paris, informing the Baron that the fame of the first earring had raised the price of the second to an absurd degree.

Immense was the disgust of our antiquarian friend when he received the reply to his letter. The Baron said simply that he would content himself with the one beautiful earring which he already possessed, and did not care to buy the second. Castellani was not accustomed to such defeats. He kept the jewel till his death, and at the sale of his effects Baron Edmond de Roth-

GOLD EARRING

Purchased at Castellani sale, 1884, by Baron Edmond Rothschild.

schild bid for the second earring, and obtained it for ten or twelve thousand francs. Poor Alessandro! But I ought not to pity him, for he never sat down under a defeat. New triumphs blotted out the past, and no one, better than he, ever deserved the epithet of 'unwearying.'

CHAPTER VII

One day I received a visit from a country fellow, who said he had come from the neighbourhood of Canino, and brought with him a vase painted in the early Corinthian manner, the names of the figures being indicated by Greek inscriptions. The man declared he had discovered it in a tomb which had fallen in after heavy rains. The price asked was very reasonable, and the bargain was soon concluded. At that time, M. van Brantighem, so well known among amateurs for the splendid collection of vases and terra-cottas, which he had just sold in Paris, was one of the most eager buyers of Greek vases, and he was so envious of my acquisition that I had real

pleasure in giving it up to him. A little while after this, there called on me at my house, a member of the French School in Rome, M. Gsell, whose acquaintance I had not yet made. M. Gsell had been entrusted, on behalf of the French School, with the excavations on Prince Torlonia's property in Etruria. According to the agreement, the Prince was to remain possessor of everything that was discovered, but he reposed such confidence in the young *savant* who had undertaken the work that he omitted the usual precaution of appointing an agent of his own to superintend the diggers. When M. Gsell came to see me I was entirely ignorant of all these facts; it was a common thing for travellers and archæologists to ask to be allowed to visit my collections during the winter months that I spent in Rome, so I at once proceeded to display my cases of glass to M. Gsell. But this was not what he wanted. He

began by asking me if I had not lately purchased a vase which he closely described, and which proved to be the very one I had bought from the native of Canino. Now M. Gsell inspected so attentively, night as well as day, the excavations under his care, that it was impossible, he assured me, for the workmen to have stolen anything. All objects found were registered as soon as they were taken out of the tombs, and were locked up every evening in a warehouse. However, one day M. Gsell perceived that one of the most beautiful vases which had been placed in the warehouse had disappeared. Knowing that one of his superintendents (an inhabitant of the district) alone had access to the warehouse, he immediately concluded that this man must be the thief. He sent for him; and by means of threats he extracted a confession of the theft, and the name of the amateur to whom the vase had been sold In conclusion, M. Gsell

entreated me to let him have the vase, offering to refund me out of his own pocket the price I had paid to the dishonest superintendent; for, he added, it would not do to allow the loss to fall on the French School, by subtracting the sum from the amount voted towards the expenses of the diggings, and still less should it come on Prince Torlonia, who was ignorant of the whole matter. Having parted with the vase, I felt the situation very embarrassing, but I told my interlocutor what had happened, and why I had handed the vase over to M. van Branteghem. The distress of M. Gsell on hearing this news touched me to such a degree that I ended by telling him that, knowing M. van Branteghem to be a gentleman, I would inform him that he had become the owner of stolen goods, and throw myself on his mercy. The same day I wrote to the Belgian amateur and made a clean breast of the matter, and the vase was returned as quickly as

possible. I at once took it to the French School, and left it there, refusing their offer to refund me the money I had expended. The vase was replaced among its comrades from the tombs of Vulci, in the museum of the Prince Torlonia at the Lungara.

Years passed away, when one morning I was told that a peasant, who was waiting in the hall, desired to show me an antique work of art. This was an event of daily occurrence—indeed it happened several times every day, and usually I found that the object for whose sake I had been disturbed was either quite uninteresting or else a fraud. But this time—astonishing fact!—I was shown the very vase that I had restored to the French School, and had afterwards seen at the Lungara Museum. Once again, it had been stolen!

A similar, but still more unpleasant, adventure occurred to me on another

occasion. Although I only collect antiquities, yet if a fine piece of mediæval or Renaissance work is offered to me at a low price, I could not have it on my conscience to decline it. In 1894 a Roman antiquarian of the second rank brought me some leaves of a manuscript dating from the tenth century. It was of a large size, and the whole page was covered with a superb miniature, while on the back were Greek texts, written in gold, black, and purple. The manuscript was in perfect preservation, and the work of the Byzantine miniaturist wonderfully fine. A hundred francs was asked for each leaf by the dealer. The miniatures, he said, were not his own, but belonged to a man living in the provinces, who declared that he had many portfolios full of them; and the dealer had brought these few specimens—by no means the best in the collection—to Rome, to see if he could sell them at a reasonable profit. The miniatures were so good, and the price

so modest, that I made up my mind to buy them.

Some days after, when I was poking about the shops, I saw in Simonetti's another set of miniatures on parchment, plainly, from the style, by the same hand as the first, only the leaves were rather smaller and came from one of the Gospels, while mine formed part of the Old Testament. The temptation to buy was strong, and I yielded to it. Soon after, the original dealer came back, bringing with him some large leaves, even more beautiful than those he had sold me first, and at the same price. I was entangled in the wheel, and again I bought them. However, when my friend returned for the *third* time, offering me *nineteen* new leaves, I refused them, not wishing to spend so much money on what was, after all, outside my collection. The man went away, and for several months I saw nothing more of him, till one morning my servant announced a visit from him.

He entered, accompanied by two men who were strangers to me. One of these began by asking if it was true that the dealer who was with them had sold me some miniatures. Perfectly true, I replied, but that if he thought I wanted any more, he was wrong, because I had got as many as I cared for already. On that, the man informed me that he and his comrade were detectives, and that they had followed, or rather brought, the dealer to me, so as to hear his explanation. These miniatures, said the detective, were part of a burglary committed by a Neapolitan in the Vatican Library. The thief, known for years to the *employés* of the Library, who took him for a serious student, always made a point of asking for the most beautiful and rarest manuscripts containing miniatures, and appeared to examine them with the closest attention. But in reality he was furnished with scissors, which he used so cleverly that at every visit he cut

several pages, which he carried away under his cloak. In this manner he had pillaged and ruined several priceless works of the Middle Ages or of the Renaissance. Nothing would have stopped the depredations of this Vandal if, irritated at the low prices offered him by the dealers—he was said only to get ten francs a sheet !—he had not had the impudence to present some of the sheets to the Italian Minister of Public Instruction. Then it was speedily discovered that the manuscripts belonged to the Vatican Library, and the hand of the law seized the culprit by the collar.

It is needless to say that I hastened to hand over the sheets in my possession to the police agents, who gave me a receipt in exchange. A document was prepared, signed by all the witnesses. The following day this abominable theft was the common talk of Rome. Several dealers were even arrested, but they were soon released, as they were

able to prove that they had bought the miniatures in perfect good faith. Some of the leaves had, it was said, been taken to Florence, where they had been bought and carried off by American tourists, and these have never been traced. Most of the others were sequestrated, and afterwards restored to the Vatican. The thief was, as he richly deserved, sentenced to imprisonment, but the unfortunate Monsignor Carini, Director of the Vatican Library, died of the grief which this business caused him.

CHAPTER VIII

During the first years after the occupation of Rome by Victor Emmanuel's army, the population of the city increased very rapidly, and it was necessary to consider the question of new quarters. There was ample space, and numerous companies were quickly formed which speedily bought up most of the available ground. Not content with acquiring property within the city itself, the companies purchased at a high price all the villas they could get and all the land not yet built upon for several miles round Rome. Then began a time of wild speculation. The companies sold the land in small lots, and by the metre, generally to speculators who had no ready money to pay for it ; and although their price was

heavy, they only required one-fifth of the amount to be paid down. The remainder was to follow at so much a year after the buildings were finished.

As, however, the buyer had usually exhausted all his available capital in the payment of the deposit, the company advanced on mortgage the sum needful to construct one storey. When this was done another loan was made in order to complete the second storey, and so on to the roof. Once finished, it resulted that the company had advanced nearly all the value of the house, and by the mortgage it held was more the owner than the legal proprietor. In the beginning houses let easily, and were pretty dear, for the new buildings were situated near the centre of the town, and the speculators soon grew rich, although it was the masons and the contractors who counted their gains by millions of francs. In the course of a few years many considerable fortunes were made, and these

brilliant successes encouraged others to speculate, and the building mania spread. Some of the richest members of the Roman aristocracy caught the infection, and ended by ruining themselves. The number of buildings being no longer in proportion to the population, the greater part remained empty, or were abandoned before they were even completed, and are to-day tumbling into ruins. The collapse brought down in its fall both companies and speculators, and it is easy to understand that this craze for new and cheap buildings had a disastrous influence on the quality of the houses. This is not the place to speak of the deplorable taste of the architecture and external decorations of the immense caravanserais erected in those days. Rome was filled with houses that were more like provincial barracks than anything else, or sometimes—which was still worse—like palaces with their façades stuck all over with absurd ornaments,

in the most atrocious taste. And, besides, the city architects proved so exceedingly lenient as to the quality of the buildings, that one has positively seen oneself huge edifices cracking without an earthquake, and some even falling to pieces. The soil of Rome having been raised during the last two thousand years, no virgin land is to be found in which the foundations of a building can be safely laid, except at a depth of fifteen, twenty, or even thirty metres.[1] It is, therefore, essential, before erecting walls, to undertake very costly works.

Let us see how the speculators surmounted this obstacle.

From time to time they sunk a kind of shaft down into the virgin soil, and on this they constructed piles, which were joined at or near the level of the soil by vaulted arches. On this frail basis houses six or seven storeys high

[1] About thirty-three yards.

were erected, with shoddy materials and absurdly thin walls. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at if these buildings collapsed at the first little earthquake, for very few people—though here and there one might be found—preferred to build on solid and unbroken foundations, as was formerly the custom in Rome, where the old edifices many hundreds of years old have shown no signs of giving way. This new method of constructing houses on spaced out piles has been also a real misfortune for archæologists, who hoped to discover important monuments in the deep trenches that furrowed these wide tracts of land. The disappointment was great, for fragments of statues, heads, hands or feet, were discovered in the shafts, and a very little digging in the adjoining ground might have discovered the rest. But as everything was pushed on as fast as possible, nobody paid any heed to buried antiquities, and walls rose

quickly on surfaces where rested works of art it would have been so easy to bring to light. Occasionally, but very rarely, they came by accident on a complete statue, and when, after a term of years, the new buildings crumble into ruins, and others are raised on a more solid basis, archæology can look forward to a rich harvest of marbles. Unhappily, the fragments discovered in sinking the shafts will probably always be missing. It is, therefore, urgent to place these fragments in safety for the future, and never to lose sight of them, even if, in their present state, they seem worth little or nothing.

These extensive works have brought to light a considerable number of antiquities, for in spite of the vigilance of the agents of the company, and of municipal or Government inspectors, the workmen almost always managed to carry off by night anything they had found by day, and during fifteen years

the trade of Rome was enriched by sculptures. The supply of bronzes was much scantier, and those that were found were generally badly injured. Indeed, Roman soil is useless for the preservation of bronzes. Not only does it cover them with a detestable *patina*, but it gives them what is known as 'the bronze disease,' a sort of canker, called by the Romans *fioritura*, which does not let go its prey till the bronze is converted at the end of a few years into green dust.

The Senator Giovanni Barraco was the only Italian who profited by the unusual supply of marbles extracted from the soil of Rome; and, being a man of taste and learning, he knew what to choose, and managed in a short time to form the admirable collection of Greek marbles of which M. Helbig has published an account. Some foreigners, myself among them, also bought some of the sculptures; on my own part, I looked out for Roman

busts of the first century B.C. M. Jacobsen, the famous Copenhagen brewer, bought everything to which he took a fancy; I ended by selling him all my Roman marbles, to which I afterwards added a fine collection of Greek marbles that came from Athens and from Asia. Naturally, the municipal museums had their share of the spoil. They were obliged to open new rooms in the museum of the Capitol to receive the recently discovered marbles, among which were *chefs-d'œuvre* like the bust of Commodus and the Venus of the Esquiline. But, thanks to the zeal of M. Barnabei, it was the State that reaped the greatest advantage. It is to him we owed the new and splendid museum of the Thermæ, and there the fine bronze statues found in the outskirts of the Giardino Colonna, and a quantity of valuable sculptures out of the Tiber, have been placed. M. Barnabei, assisted by Count Cozza, opened also a museum outside the

Porto del Popolo; this was the *Papa Giulio* Museum, and was intended chiefly for monuments of Latin and Etruscan art.

CHAPTER IX

Works of ancient art in silver are as rare in Italy as in other parts of Europe. Except in Pompeii, where the excavations have furnished a great number of silver vessels to the museum at Naples, only two important 'finds' have taken place in our time, those of Vicarello and Bosco Reale. Vicarello, the Vichy of ancient Rome, was famous for its mineral waters; and sick people came thither from all parts of the Roman empire, hoping to gain mitigation or cure in return for their weary journey.

Before leaving Vicarello the invalids, whose prayers were granted, offered to the presiding nymph the cup out of which they had drunk the healing waters of the spring. Several years

ago the place where these cups were deposited was accidentally discovered; among them were some of remarkable artistic beauty, and others which had engraved on their sides the route taken by the travellers to Vicarello. I was lucky enough when at Rome to be able to get hold of one of them ornamented with flowers in relief and with ribbon knots. This cup, by no means a particularly good specimen, was taken from me by Castellani in one of our frequent exchanges, and I do not know what has become of it. The whole treasure, having been discovered on lands belonging to the Jesuits, was placed by them in their museum at Rome, known as the Kircher Museum, after the Jesuit Father who founded it. Beside it was the most beautiful cup of the collection, which the Jesuits authorised Father Garrucci to sell for the benefit of the great work he was preparing on Christian art. As I happened to be on

friendly terms with Father Garrucci, it was not long before I saw this splendid cup, with an exquisite bas-relief chased over it, but of rather a doubtful subject. However, the subject was in great measure redeemed by the workmanship, especially as what was peculiarly objectionable had been carefully kept to one corner. I told the Jesuit that I wished much to become the possessor of this goblet. 'I cannot sell it to you,' said Garrucci, 'but I will give it to you as a present if you will promise to pay the expenses of publication of the book that I am going to bring out.' This proposal was very embarrassing. I longed to have the cup, yet I felt quite ignorant as to the cost of publishing a huge manuscript illustrated by several hundreds of plates, and Garrucci knew as little about it as I did. Prudence gained the day, and I gave it up.

A year or two later the Rouen Crœsus, M. Dutuit, was bitten by the

same idea, and paid Garrucci a visit. This time the Jesuit was less exacting, and only asked 20,000 francs (800*l.*) for the cup. M. Dutuit agreed to the price, and signed, at Father Garrucci's desk, a cheque for the sum on his Paris banker. But the Father was of a suspicious nature, and, not knowing M. Dutuit even by name, he refused the cheque and demanded ready money. The rich Rouennais, who had prejudices of his own, took huff, closed his purse, and took his departure. Some months later, during my summer absence, Father Garrucci, needing money for his publisher, confided the cup to a man, who took it to Paris, where it became the property of Baron Edmond de Rothschild.

After this time there was no important discovery of the same sort in Italy till 1895, when one of my friends, who lived at Naples, told me that in a place called Bosco Reale, not far from Pompeii, and near Torre Annunziata,

the owner had begun some diggings, in the course of which he had come upon a Roman villa. In this villa several beautiful things had been already found, which were for sale. Without losing a moment, I hastened to Bosco Reale and the site of the excavations, which had gone very deep. A building had certainly been discovered of considerable size, but, as far as they had seen, it did not suggest the villa of a wealthy Roman. The owner, who was himself superintending the workmen, did me the honours. When we had visited every inch, he conducted me to a *palazzo* a little distance off. (In Naples every house with a carriage-drive is a *palazzo*.) Here all the objects discovered had been placed. These indicated the wealth of the original proprietor far more clearly than his house had done : nearly all were good, and some exceptionally beautiful. I saw two huge baths, one decorated with four large

lions' heads, several candelabra of excellent design, and a multitude of bronze vases, overlaid with silver, but in bad preservation. In another room he showed me a set of smaller things, finer and richer in quality, and for the most part in perfect preservation. There was no difficulty in making a selection. Amongst other treasures, I put on one side a silver bust of a woman, whose hair was dressed in the fashion of the first century of the Empire. Unluckily, a great portion of the face was covered with a crust of oxide so thick as to be very disfiguring. I also took a silver mirror, the handle of which was formed by the club of Hercules, with the lion's skin rolled round it and the fore paws encircling the disc.[1] We agreed on the price, but the Neapolitan told me I must not take away my purchases without permission from the Director of the Naples

[1] Later, I presented this mirror to the Louvre.

ETRUSCAN BRONZE HEAD

Tyskiewicz Collection : now in British Museum.

Museum. This having been obtained, a few days later the objects I had selected were brought to me at Rome. The moment had arrived for me to leave the Eternal City for Paris, where I always passed the spring months. Scarcely had I reached Paris when I was informed that some Italians had quite recently come there, bringing with them a splendid collection of silver vessels found at Pompeii. When I first heard this news I declined to believe it. I imagined merely that some sharper had possessed himself of several pieces of the imitation silver things that swarm at Naples, and wished to dispose of them in Paris. I went, however, to see them, and great was my surprise to find the wonderful set of plate familiar to everybody nowadays, thanks to the generosity of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, who bought the whole collection and gave it to the Louvre.

I have omitted to say that, after my

purchase of the first two works of art in silver discovered at Bosco Reale, I wasted about forty days in fruitless efforts to remove the crust which overlaid the face of the Roman lady; but, as my labours were in vain, I ended by exchanging the figure with a Roman dealer. He brought it over to Paris, but, as no one seemed anxious to buy it, he returned with it to Italy. When I inspected the treasure of Bosco Reale, I remarked among the finest pieces a bowl with the bust of a man—probably that of the owner of the villa—in the centre, and it was not difficult to guess that the female figure I had parted with represented his wife, and that it also must have decorated the centre of a bowl. Besides, the vessel with the Roman bust was single, while all the others were in pairs. I told these facts to several people, and the search for the Italian dealer was immediately instituted, for everyone was now anxious to have the figure which

all had previously despised. But the amateurs were too late ; the bust was already in the British Museum !

The Italian newspapers made a great fuss about the treasure from Bosco Reale. They talked of refusing leave to excavate, of bringing an action, and a great deal more. Newspapers are bad judges in such matters. Nowhere, in a civilised country, could the government assume the right of digging in private property without special permission. If the proprietor is forbidden to dig himself, the antiquities would remain buried in the earth without profit to anyone. At Bosco Reale it was most desirable that the work of excavation should be conducted with the greatest care. I am quite convinced that the part hitherto laid bare is only the bath and the slaves' quarters ; the portion of the dwelling inhabited by the owner is probably still hidden under the soil. Who can say what profit might not result to our

scientific knowledge from the exploration of a rich Roman house of the first century, besides all the small discoveries in detail which could not fail to be brought to light? If the Government prohibited new excavations, those already made would be filled up; in a few years people would cease to discuss them, and then one day or other, underground galleries would be secretly bored, works of art would be found and carried away, and archæology would have lost a magnificent opportunity of increasing its knowledge. I cherish the hope that things may not turn out thus.

CHAPTER X

THE family of Torlonia, of which I have so often had occasion to speak, possessed immense property near Canino. On a rocky elevation forming part of these estates stands an Etruscan mausoleum of large size, known by the name of the *Cucumella*. This mausoleum had been during some time an object of attention and curiosity on the part of archæologists. It was believed on good grounds to contain the bones of some great Etruscan prince, and many, but vain, efforts had been made to discover the opening of the principal crypt, where lay the dead man in whose honour a monument of such importance had been raised. Torlonia, on his side, had not been behindhand in the search.

Paths were found in the neighbourhood of the mausoleum cut in part through the rock itself, all leading directly to the tomb, though none absolutely reaching it. Along these paths were also found a certain number of other tombs, more or less insignificant, but nothing that could serve as an indication for penetrating the mysterious monument. At length the workmen were transferred to a place nearly a mile off, and there they discovered quite a new road to the Cucumella. Following this road, they ended by coming out at the foot of the immense tumulus, but at a great depth. But at this juncture the Prince fell ill, and the work was stopped, and finally abandoned altogether.

M. W. Helbig, at that time secretary of the German Archæological Institute, had taken the deepest interest in the affair, and was much disappointed when the investigations ceased. As soon as the old prince had recovered from his

illness, he begged him earnestly to re-open the campaign, but Torlonia was deaf to all his prayers; he thought he had spent too much already. Having heard through M. Helbig of the old man's obstinacy, I entreated the German *savant* to do his best to obtain for me the permission to continue the excavations at my own cost, and subject to any conditions the Prince thought fit to impose. But in Prince Torlonia self-respect was even stronger than economy. He stopped M. Helbig almost before he opened his mouth, and gave peremptory orders that the work should be resumed. In a short time, the men succeeded in penetrating into the Etruscan tomb, where they found an empty room, the walls of which were entirely covered with bronze plaques. As soon as Torlonia was informed of this fact, he once more interrupted the work, declaring that as the first room had been found empty, it stood to reason that the whole tomb

had been visited and robbed, either in ancient times or in the Middle Ages. This time, the excavations were given up for good, and soon after the Prince fell ill and died.

The secret of the Cucumella is still to be discovered. It is greatly to be desired that the heirs of Prince Torlonia should do all they can themselves, or allow others to undertake the matter at their own risk, to make the sphinx give up her secret. A mausoleum so large and so well preserved must have undoubtedly attracted the attention of the violators of tombs, who have most assuredly visited and robbed it. But experience has frequently shown that the desecrators of ancient tombs stole only the objects in precious metals, and despised the rest. One might, therefore, hope to discover in these subterranean vaults, sarcophagi, urns, marbles, bronzes, terra-cottas—perhaps even frescoes, and, most valuable of all, inscriptions—which would give us at

last the key of the mystery, and the names of its dead inhabitants.

When, during the reign of Pius IX., it was necessary to choose a site for a large railway station, the spot finally decided on formed part of the wide tract of ground in front of the Baths of Diocletian, and was close to the Villa Massimi. Here a little hill had gradually been created out of waste earth and *debris* of all sorts which the convicts of past centuries had been forced to cart from the interior of Rome. The tiny hill had now become a large one, and was surmounted by the statue of a seated woman representing Justice. Hence it was known as the Monte Giustizia.

At this time I was occupied with excavations in the Villa Massimi, therefore I was only a step from the raised ground. Knowing that it was the intention of the engineers to level the surface of Monte Giustizia, I hoped to

obtain permission to dig, naturally at my own cost, on this particular spot. I accordingly addressed a letter to that effect to the Council of the Administration of Railways, presided over by a Roman prince, and composed of several members of the aristocracy. My request was refused ; but the sons and nephews of the Council obtained the leave that had been denied to me, and formed an association having for its object excavation at their common expense, which had been suggested by my letter. For three or four months the work went on ; but as it was confined to the earth carried from elsewhere, nothing was found, and the young men lost heart and threw up the enterprise.

The young princes and their *scavatori* were replaced by the company's engineers and their workmen. The number of hands employed was large, and the work got on quickly. They soon reached the bed of earth which was no longer formed of *débris* and rubbish,

and here antiquities were thick, and quantities were daily brought to light. The site of the Prætorian camp was close by, which fact explains the immense number of Roman medals which were discovered. Of course medals, coins, and other small things slipped into the pockets of the diggers, and every evening at the Ave Maria, when the men quitted their workings, they found awaiting them at the gate a regiment of dealers' agents, anxious to get the spoil at first hand. At this period old coins were so common that the men never got more than a few pence for them. Indeed, they hardly knew the difference between coins and medallions, and contented themselves with merely asking for the medals a penny or two more. If the medallion was thick, and of considerable size, the peasants called it *grossa patacca*, and always got a *scudo* for it. One of the agents, named Sandola, a very poor but intelligent man, showed

a feverish activity in his business, and had managed, more than any of his colleagues, to inspire the workmen with special confidence. The finest coins and most precious medallions were bought by him, and sold to me in turn at a fixed price of a hundred *scudi* (crowns) for the large ones, and forty for the small. It was then that I laid the foundation of that fine collection of Roman medals, which I have since increased by purchases made either in Italy or at the sales in London and Paris. Later, it went to enrich the medal department in Berlin. After his success in the medallion trade of Monte Giustizia, Sandola continued to prosper in all his enterprises. He took a small shop, and became a dealer in antiquities. He had several sons whom he trained from their earliest years to go off to any place where the soil was being turned up, to make friends with the workmen, and to bring them to their father. Soon all the little objects picked up in Rome

found their way to him. He gave his children the education suitable to the trade for which he intended them, and had them taught the goldsmith's art, engraving, the working of bronze, and such things. The father himself never knew how to keep his money; the wretched little shop formed his entire property, and all his life he remained poor. But his sons made the best of the education they had received. Each of them now has an 'emporium' of antiquities, and the few ancient works of art at present to be met with in Rome pass through their hands.

To return to Monte Giustizia. It was finally levelled to the ground, after having furnished us with a number of antiquities, the best of which are to be seen to-day in the Municipal Museum. It is much to be regretted that this bit of ancient Rome, crossed by the wall of Servius, has not been explored to its former level, for it is probable that the excavations would have yielded brilliant

results. The site of Monte Giustizia not having been built over, the soil was not dug for foundations. It is used at present as a siding for railway trucks, and there is nothing to hinder deep excavations from being made. The foundations of the large railway station, which only lies a short distance off, reached the ancient level at a depth of about thirty metres, or thirty-three yards, roughly speaking.

CHAPTER XI

In my last chapter I have made some allusions to my collection of Roman medals, and this recalls to my memory an amusing story in connection with them.

Finding myself in Paris during the month of August, I received a visit from a well-known Italian dealer, who told me that he was on his way to London, where he hoped to sell by auction a large and important collection of Roman medallions. As he knew I was fond of these things, he informed me that there were at least seventeen of them in the collection. We went to see them at his own house, and found them all of the first water and very rare. Naturally I longed to buy them, but the owner refused my

offer, giving as his reason that the sale had already been advertised in London and the catalogues printed, and that without the medals the collection would lose its chief attraction. 'Come over to London,' he said, 'and you can buy all my medals at the public sale.' This proposal only half satisfied me, and I made another in return. 'Fix a price for the whole of the seventeen medals,' I said, 'and, if I am willing to give it, I will pay you ready money. You can still take your medals to London and exhibit them at the sale, but they will be sold there at *my* risk only. I will go to London and be present at the sale, and will push on the bidding to whatever sum I choose. As they will be sold for my benefit, and not for yours, I shall be at liberty to make the wildest bids for any object that I want specially, and to part with the less important ones if it appears advantageous.' To this suggestion he agreed, and the price of the seventeen

GREEK VASE

Tyskiewicz Collection: now in British Museum. Winner of Torch race from Altar of Prometheus to City of Athens. Painted by Nikias.

medals was fixed at 17,000 francs (680*l.*). The medals became my property, and took the road to London.

Some months later the sale took place, and I reached London the night before. The first day was quiet; they were selling consular medals, in which I took no interest, but I stayed on in order to study the aspect of the sale. Among the numerous buyers I noticed a tall Englishman, standing by the side of the auctioneer, who carried on his bidding in the most obstinate manner, but only cared for the best things. One of my neighbours in the room, the late Vicomte de Quélon, a great admirer of fine coins, explained to me who the gentleman was that had excited my curiosity. He was an immensely rich corn merchant, with a craze for attending auctions of every sort of work of art, bidding high for anything he saw was desired by others, and understanding by this means—for he was totally ignorant of these matters—

that the object was really valuable. Quélon, knowing that the medals had brought me there, added that he was sorry for me if M. A. happened to be present at the sale next day.

The following morning found M. A. encamped in the same place as before. My friends and colleagues received me with glances of pity, and the proceedings began. The first medal was laid on the table; the battle was opened between M. A. and myself. I bid for the medal at twice its reasonable value, and my antagonist having covered my bid, I left the medal in his hands, for my profits on this were large enough to allow me to bid higher for the other medals, which I really wanted. The same game was played for the thirteen medals which came after, in spite of the fact that I had forced several men to bid extravagantly. I foamed inwardly with rage and vexation on seeing them lay on the table the fifteenth, which was an unpublished

medal of Geta! This one, I said to myself, shall not escape me, or, if it does, I will make M. A. pay so dearly for it that the laugh shall be on my side. The medal was put up for sale at 20*l.*, and soon reached 100*l.* For a moment there was a pause; then, by bounds of 20*l.* at a time, it mounted to 250*l.* I made an advance of 50*l.*, and M. A., thinking the victory was his, offered 5*l.* more. I was greatly excited, and, with an involuntary movement of vexation, leant so heavily on the pencil I used for noting the prices in my catalogue that the point broke. M. A. smiled, and I instantly called out, 'Five hundred pounds!' M. A. stopped. He reflected for a moment, and then added, 'And five.' I was silent. I had fulfilled my aim, for the medal had fetched an absolutely ridiculous price.

After this exploit M. A. rose and left the room. He appeared no more at the sale, and I had to be contented

with the last two medals, which no one disputed with me. I had lost the fifteen medals that I coveted, but not only had I recouped myself for the 17,000 francs I had paid in Paris, but had gained 30,000 francs (1,200*l.*) besides, and the two medals into the bargain!

The funniest part of the affair was that a few weeks later a person of my acquaintance, happening to be in London, begged M. A. to allow him to see the famous medal which had cost such a large sum, but M. A. could never remember which it was. After his death the medal of Geta was bought by the British Museum for a very moderate price.

CHAPTER XII

From the very earliest times men have been occupied both in forging and in tampering with antiquities, but it is in Italy specially that this branch of swindling has blossomed into a flourishing industry. At the end of the eighteenth century, and in the first years of the nineteenth, the forgers principally confined themselves to the imitation of ancient intaglios. I will not enlarge on this theme here, having already spoken of it, but will only add that at this very moment there is not a single engraver in all Italy who imitates, even badly, an antique intaglio, or, indeed, makes a proper copy of it. The same thing cannot, unluckily, be said of the East. I have often received from there engraved stones (generally scarabs

in chalcedony) of which the workmanship was so good that any amateur might be deceived by it. A few years ago—I forget the precise date—a large number of scarabs were discovered at Cyprus, all cut and ready for engraving, but innocent of all decoration. These stones had lain for centuries buried in the earth ; they were not only antique, but had every mark of antiquity. The stones were bought by some forgers, and are now scattered over Europe in the form of scarabs, which are in truth antique, but ornamented with modern engraving. I have been quite unable to discover the clever and dangerous artist who executed these intaglios. All those that I have seen came either from Greece, Syria, or Asia Minor. I have also met with some from those regions where the engraving had been executed on a modern scarab ; but these are not hard to recognise, especially as the engraving is done by a much less skilful hand.

No metal lends itself to forgeries so easily as gold, owing to the fact that when it is pure it oxidises little, even after the lapse of centuries, and takes no *patina*. It is therefore a favourite substance for the operations of swindlers. Up to recent years Rome, Naples, and Florence were the well-known laboratories of these imitations, which were often brought to a high degree of perfection. The elder Castellani, the father of Alessandro and Augusto, a skilful and clever jeweller, was the first to discover the secret of the manufacture of Etruscan jewellery, a subject which he studied profoundly, aided by the advice of the Duke of Sermoneta. After many attempts he succeeded in imitating the tiny golden grains with which Etruscan jewels are usually ornamented, but, to tell the truth, though he found out how to solder these grains on to the surface of the jewel, he was unable to make the little balls as small as those of the Etruscans—at least as the ones

on the finest specimens, for the Etruscan goldsmiths put larger grains on coarser-made jewellery. The workmen of the Casa Castellani used frequently to undertake work outside the *atelier*, and turned the skill which they had acquired there to good account in the service of swindlers. They in their turn had pupils, and jewels of gold, decorated with minute balls, are at present fabricated in many places. But public suspicion has been now awakened, and dupes are becoming rare. Even at the public sales after the death of Alessandro Castellani a considerable number of these gold ornaments were left without a purchaser.

In Florence swindling concerned itself with another branch of gold ornaments, which it imitated to perfection. These were the large gold balls, sometimes solid and generally stamped, decorated with Etruscan subjects. The work is very carefully executed, and it is easy

to be taken in. This is a word of advice to the reader.

Naples does not shine in the perfection of its pseudo-antique jewellery. The treatment is coarse, heavy, pretentious, and often absurd. Yet Naples possesses a goldsmith of the first order in M. Melillo, who has far surpassed the work of the Casa Castellani in Rome. And, be it remarked, M. Melillo occupies himself solely with copying antique jewellery, and his productions are so fine, and in such exquisite taste, that it cannot be doubted that they have only to become better known in order to be appreciated by the whole world. Let me hasten to say that M. Melillo is an honest man who tries to deceive nobody. The articles he sells, though copied closely from ancient models, have a certain modern *cachet* which conveys no illusion of antiquity, even in the hands of a swindler. It is rather a translation of the most refined

ancient art into a modern language. And besides—and this at once renders fraud impossible—every object turned out of the *atelier* Melillo is stamped with its mark.

For some years past the forgery of gold objects has been increasing, and has extended to countries where swindlers were once hardly known. The trade of these men is rendered still more dangerous from the fact that they are almost entirely beyond reach of the law. A forger, even when taken in the act, will always swear that he is merely *imitating* the antique, which everyone has a right to do, without any fraudulent intention. As to the accomplice who tries to palm off the modern article as an antique, he pretends he is acting in good faith, that he is convinced of the antiquity of the article, and so forth. If he is asked from whom he got or received it, he always mentions some unknown person

who has left the country, or who has not given his name.

I will bring this parenthesis to a close, and return to the new centres of the forgery of gold ornaments, which are the Crimea and the adjacent districts, Roumania, and Syria.

Everybody knows the splendid jewels, the glory of the Hermitage Museum, furnished by the numerous tumuli of the Crimea and the South of Russia, of which only the few specimens stolen by the workmen have been sold to foreigners. The unanimous admiration of artists and archæologists for the marvels of the Greek art of the fourth century, and even of the local Scythian productions, inspired some rogues with the idea of imitating and selling modern articles made in the same style. A factory of false jewellery was founded at Kertch (the ancient Panticapea), and its goods were disposed of under the rose, as the result of secret diggings or of lucky finds. The first customers

were the collectors of Odessa, and amateurs residing in the towns of South Russia. Thus encouraged, the trade increased, and its productions soon invaded the west of Europe. That I was not myself one of its victims I owe to Count Gregory Stroganoff. A wealthy Russian, who was spending the winter at Rome, spoke to me of a newly found treasure from a tumulus in Olbia which he had bought, consisting of several articles in gold and a silver plaque decorated with Greek myths, and a subject in relief. The honesty of this Russian is beyond dispute, and at my request he showed me some photographs of the articles, and agreed to sell them to me for a tolerably large sum. A letter was sent to Russia, and very soon my purchases arrived in Rome. At first sight I felt dazzled and delighted. The silver plaque alone caused me a little uneasiness, but as I had never seen the imitations made by the Scythians from the models brought

from Athens through the channel of Greek commerce, I put down the features which shocked my eye to their somewhat barbarous art. I must, however, add that with the false antique jewels were mixed some really authentic ones, though these were of minor importance.

I hastened to display my acquisitions to some of my friends, and M. Geffroy, then Director of the French School at Rome, sent an account of them to the Academy of Inscriptions. As the reports of the meetings of the Academy are reprinted in the newspapers and read everywhere, I very soon received letters from learned archæologists in St. Petersburg asking for details, while an artistic review in Paris wrote to be allowed the privilege of first publication at its own expense. Upon this Count Gregory Stroganoff, who had just arrived from Russia, came to call upon me. The moment his eyes fell on my treasures he exclaimed, 'Musica! Musica!' which is the slang word used

in Rome for a forgery. I was dumb with consternation, for Count Stroganoff was an authority on the subject, both as possessing a magnificent collection himself, and as having frequent occasion to study the jewels in the Hermitage.

The Count then told me all he knew about these imitations. He had come straight from Odessa, where he had seen a number of gold articles made in Kertch and Roumania. A large collection of gold objects of art had recently been bought in Odessa for the Hermitage Museum, and included some forgeries emanating from the same sources. Count Stroganoff completed his kindness by pointing out to me characteristic details in which the hand of the forger was revealed. In short, he convinced me absolutely. I then went to the Russian from whom I had bought the jewels and related all that Count Stroganoff had said. The Russian at once agreed to take back

the collection, which he forwarded again to Russia, and returned me the money I had paid. I have since often come across jewels, cups, and gold and silver plaques all of similar make, and it was not difficult to recognise the style of the same forger. Some of these have even found a place in museums, but the greater number were rejected, and ultimately became the property of collectors in Germany.

The Roumanian forgeries are very similar to those of Kertch, but coarser and easier to detect.

Let us now pass on to the East, but before doing so I will just add that they have also tried to make false jewels in Greece. As they are, however, almost all in the style of the Roman jewels, with tiny grains of gold for ornament, they come under the head of the current Italian forgeries, and need not trespass on our attention. But it is in Syria that the manufacture of gold works of art is

most extensive. The Syrian forgeries are absolutely different from the Italian ones. The acquaintance of the Syrian forgers with Greek and Etruscan jewellery is very slight, but they have some knowledge of heavy Byzantine jewellery, and of the native articles in gold and other metals. Hence the things they make are clumsy and often massive, but they nearly always copy antiques closely though in some other material. The artist they employ is skilful, and his work is excellent, and when one only sees a *single* specimen *for the first time* it is very difficult not to be taken in. But any man who has examined a good many of these objects cannot fail to observe that, though different epochs may be indicated by the *style*, the *workmanship* is invariably identical, betraying the hand of the same artist. And, besides, the gold used is always of the same colour. This last blemish once pointed out to the forgers, it can be speedily remedied, but it will not be

GOLD CROWN

Tyskiewicz Collection: now in British Museum. From Magna Græcia.

so easy—if it is not impossible—to find a number of artists as skilful as this one, who would be ready to place their talents at the disposal of the work. But, however this may be, we must all keep our eyes open, and mistrust any works of art in gold that come either from Syria or from the South of Russia.

CHAPTER XIII

Forgers have likewise attempted to copy antique silver plate, but their efforts have been very unsuccessful. They would have instantly betrayed themselves had they tried to imitate any of the fine pieces preserved in museums, for these pieces are invariably well known, and have usually been reproduced in electro-plate. Besides, no one has yet been found who has the talent necessary for inventing subjects similar to those of the old plate, and for executing them satisfactorily. The few essays in this direction have resulted in the confusion of their authors. I remember to have seen a great silver cup in Rome that purported to have come from some secret excavations in Sicily. It was orna-

mented with a circular bas-relief representing—could anyone believe such a thing?—the *frieze* of the *Parthenon!* In the height of his innocence the forger had given the frieze in its present ruined condition. The cup obtained an immediate success—of shouts of laughter!

I must mention, however, that contemporary chemistry has placed various ingenious processes at the service of forgers, by which they can make an imitation, *perfect to the eye*, of the violet *patina* taken on by silver plate after it has remained in the earth for several centuries. This *patina* is very soft, and anyone who has been warned can detect its falsity. No connoisseur could ever be duped twice.

One cannot, alas! say the same as regards objects in bronze. In this material forgery has reached a pitch of perfection that is very discouraging. Even the most learned connoisseurs

are not safe. Formerly the false *patina* was *applied*, if one may use the word, to the bronze, and only a beginner could fall into the snare. But now a *patina* can be produced in all respects identical to that of the action of time. The High Priest of this species of swindling is a Roman well known to all collectors on the banks of the Tiber. Belonging by birth to a family of chemists, and a clever chemist himself, he has invented a method of imparting to bronze *every kind of known patina*, from the beautiful smooth and brilliant sort that is blue or green, to the rough *patina* produced by the soil of Rome, or the bed of the river.

It is known that certain sorts of soil, that of Rome amongst others, produces a rough *patina* of deep green. This *patina* is affected by a disease called bronze canker, which manifests itself by little whitey-green dots, like flowery excrescences. With time, and a damp atmosphere, these dots swell, burst,

and reappear larger and more numerous. Very soon the whole surface of the bronze is covered with them; they eat into it, disintegrate it, and end by reducing it to dust. When a bronze, newly dug up, is found after a few days to show symptoms of this disease the little flowery spots must on no account be removed, for that would only increase the evil. You must—I speak from experience—*soak with ink* by means of a brush each spot separately, and be careful that the ink penetrates the entire excrescence. If, after three or four days, the blemish reappears or grows bigger, or if new spots spring up, the operation should be repeated twice or even more, and if the disease is not too deep-seated it may thus be checked. It is true that the spots of ink are not very pleasant to the eye, but as bronze canker always shows itself on a rough *patina*, the black ink-spot ends by paling, and tones in with the dark green of the

patina. The greatest care must be observed not to try and scrape away the ink-spots, for in that case the disease would probably reappear.

This digression is not altogether out of place, for I have yet to remark that the Roman forgers have pushed the art of imitating a *patina* to such lengths that from time to time they can also produce *a patina afflicted with bronze canker!* And it is not merely the appearance of the malady which they succeed in giving! It is the malady itself.

I am of opinion that it will be absolutely essential to pass a law making it penal to give to copies of antiques the appearance of objects found in the earth or in urns, so that any person transgressing this law might be proceeded against for swindling. The intent to deceive is quite plain from the moment that a bronze copy is mutilated or a *patina* is put on in a certain way. It seems to me that the

crime could be defined with sufficient clearness to allow of no evasion. What a comfort such a measure would be, not merely to collectors, but also to the keepers of public museums !

To come back to our Roman virtuoso. He began by imitating bronze medals, and had the copies stamped after rare specimens, laying on *patina* over the surface. At first only inexperienced amateurs were deceived, for the style of engraving and also the lettering were very imperfect ; but later he managed to secure the services of a very clever—perhaps too clever —engraver, and from that time the stamping was irreproachable, and the wonderful *patina* with which his new medals were covered was the joy of all collectors. Not only did our friend reproduce the finest and most unique medals, but he put in circulation admirable copies of others that were well known, the beauty of the *patina* authorising him to ask a high price. In the

end it became known that a forger was at work, and his name was discovered, but, as he had disarmed his purchasers, they were forced to be silent. I ought to add that this individual practised another kind of forgery, very hard of detection. He took authentic bronze medals, whose surfaces were blurred, and struck them again by means of his false stamps, so that on a really antique metal the rarest numismatic types were reproduced.

This fraudulent trade had a bad effect on the trade that was honest. Numismatists took fright, and their mistrust is still far from being set at rest. I have seen perfectly genuine pieces refused by everyone, and I must say that, although I believed them genuine myself, I could not blame those who declined to have anything to do with them.

As soon as collectors of coins were on their guard, the forger sought to indemnify himself in other directions,

and set about making statuettes. Mere copying was easy enough, but he ought to have known better than to try to create new types. This, however, he did, though without success. The dealers themselves refused to be taken in. Then he curbed his ambition, and contented himself with imitating, with slight variations, more or less famous antique statues. I have seen a certain number of these copies, all beautifully covered with *patina*, and, among others, *replicas* of the Narcissus and the Dancing Faun of Naples, found, it is said, at Pompeii or at Bosco Reale. I have also seen the portrait of a Roman of the Republic, the head life-size, and covered with a lustrous emerald-green *patina*. One little detail aroused my suspicion. I noticed that the *patina* was smooth, unbroken, and hard all over the bronze, not even excepting the surface of the hair. About the thin edges round the neck the

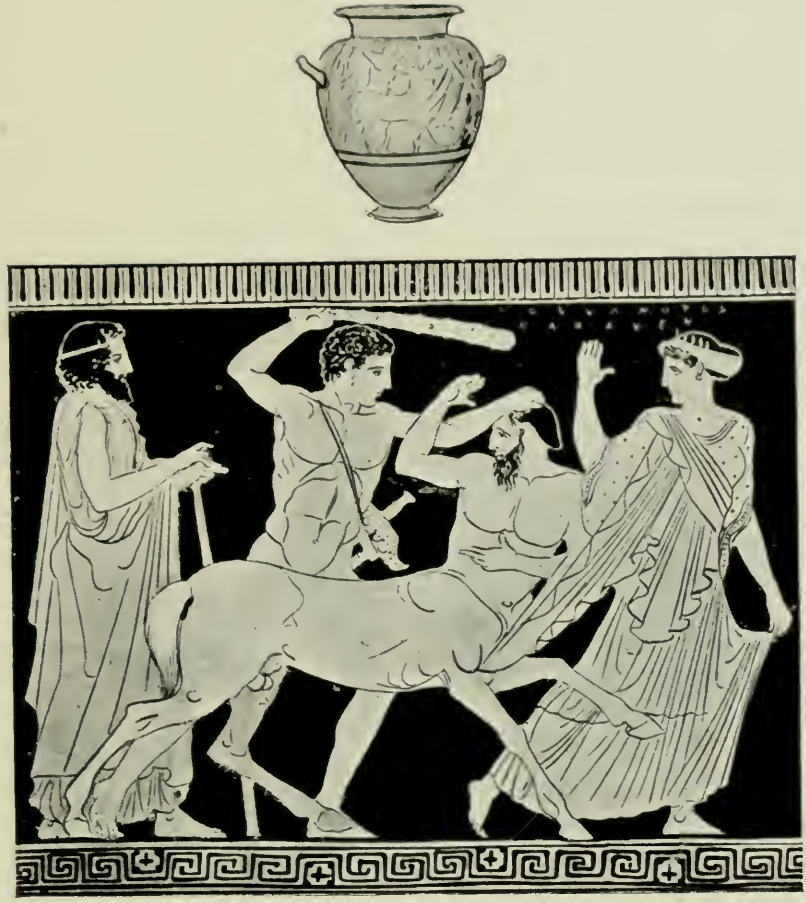
patina had scaled off, and when I passed my nail over the surface of the chipped place the *patina underneath* crumbled into dust. This head is, I am told, copied from a genuine head in marble which exists in some private collection.

To finish with the subject of bronze forgeries, I believe that an archæologist, or even a simple amateur with a certain amount of experience, can nearly always decide on the authenticity of a statuette or of a relief, but it is otherwise as regards coins. There is nothing for it but to give up collecting them, because to my mind it has become impossible to tell the false from the true. Let us, then, wish with all our might for a law against the forgery of antiquities, and, further, that it should be severe, for it is quite time to put an end to the impunity enjoyed by a set of rascals who are the only people living permitted to pursue in peace a criminal occupation.

I have little to say about the imitation of glass and of ancient marbles, for the forgers of these branches of art still are very clumsy. The Murano factories copy, it is true, antique glass objects, but never so as to deceive an expert amateur. Besides, the iridescence produced on a glass which has been buried for centuries in the earth has never been made artificially. The utmost that has been done is to obtain by the aid of chemistry a sort of thin veil tinted with a suggestion of iridescence.

The forgers in marble have also been able to imitate neither the growths and incrustations produced underground by the roots of trees and plants, nor the calcareous concretions formed on the marble by the influence of the soil. Some attempts in this direction have been made in Greece, but I doubt if many people were duped by them. The imitators of pottery have been more successful.

The Neapolitans, above all others, excel in this industry; and it is in ancient Capua, now Sta. Maria di Capua Vetere, that the best *ateliers* for the manufacture of painted vases are situated. It is necessary to understand what is meant by *forged* painted vases. Even the famous connoisseur in ceramics, Raimondi, who only died a few years ago, and was considered the master of his art at Sta. Maria—even he could never invent altogether the decoration of a vase so as to make it pass for an antique. Only, if this talented artist could get just a few fragments of a fine vase, he was clever enough to be able, by the aid of illustrations of vases in museums or in private collections, to reconstruct the whole subject. He replaced the missing parts, and threw such an air of uniformity over the vase that it was almost impossible to tell what was modern. But if you tried to wash a vase, faked up in this manner, in pure



GREEK VASE

Tyskiewicz Collection : now in British Museum.
Heracles slaying Centaur ; painted by Polygnotos.

alcohol chemically rectified, you would find that the modern portions would vanish, while the ancient paintings would remain. Neither Raimondi nor anyone else could ever manage to discover the secret of the ancient potters, how to obtain the background of a brilliant black colour, improperly known as the *varnish of Nola*. To disguise their failure in this respect, the forgers are obliged, when the vase is entirely reconstructed and repainted, to cover it all over with a varnish of their own invention ; but the surface of this varnish, although brilliant, lacks the freshness and brightness of that used by the ancients. Relatively, this surface appears dull, and vanishes the moment it is washed with alcohol.

It is not long since the Greeks established at Athens itself laboratories for making vases and other antiquities. I know of three myself! Very few of these vases are either black or red, and those few are heavily

gilt, so that no attempt may be made to wash them over with alcohol, as it is known that even antique gilding disappears under this process. On the other hand, these gentlemen excel in turning out white vases, for the reason that these also, even when they are antique, cannot resist the action of alcohol.

Further, the large prices fetched at the Branteghem sale by white lecythi, and especially by white cups, has very naturally stimulated the activity of the forgers. Their efforts in this branch are not wholly without artistic value, but the technique might be improved. I shall refrain from pointing out in which direction, or the forgers would speedily profit by my advice! On the archæological and epigraphical side they have still much to learn. But, on the whole, the fraud is peculiarly dangerous to anyone who finds himself confronted, for the first time, with productions of this sort. It is only thanks to the

astuteness of M. S. Reinach that I did not become one of the earliest victims. I was within an ace of being tempted by an *alabastron* in white, signed with the name of an artist, and decorated with a beautifully painted subject—Diana surprised at the bath by Actæon. Since then I have seen cups, *alabastra*, and even whorls come out of the same workshop. We all are aware that forgers have specially applied themselves to the fabrication of statuettes or of terra-cotta groups. Never having interested myself consistently in objects of this kind I shall say nothing about them, for I am entirely without practical experience in this direction. But one general observation I will make about the matter. People are often tempted nowadays to exaggerate caution, and to declare an object to be a forgery solely on the evidence of a photograph or a drawing. As a rule, judgments of this nature may be traced to learned archæologists, who pronounce a work of art to be false

merely because it is something with which they are unacquainted. A certain detail of costume, a certain gesture, a certain attitude, such a manner of representing a myth, or a letter shaped in such a way, seems to them ample proof that an object is forged, when they happen to have beheld nothing like it in the ancient monuments. Often, no doubt, the judgment based on this reasoning is fully justified, as forgers are usually bad archæologists, and nearly always ignorant of the art of writing. But it sometimes occurs that specialists forget too easily that there are many things which have yet to be discovered, and that definite systems and established scientific data are far from being universally accepted. Thus, for instance, the excavations of the Athenian Acropolis have proved decisively that the date attributed to certain signed vases has been too low by nearly a century. Periodical researches bring to light new shapes

for letters, fresh details of costume, isolated examples of mythical representations. To put the case in a nutshell, when the authenticity of an object is suspected on archæological grounds, it is only after individual study that it can be declared false. Science, however deep, can never be a substitute for the eye of the connoisseur. Indeed, I personally should place more confidence in people with a practical experience of technique than in *savants* whose knowledge has come from books. I should even prefer directors of museums, some collectors, or honest antiquity dealers (there *are* such) to these *savants*, because they all have the objects, real or false, constantly passing before their eyes, while the *savants* chiefly work from photographs or drawings. In order to acquire the practice and the instantaneous judgment which constitute the true connoisseur, it is necessary to have been often deceived, and preferably at your own expense,

for nothing improves the taste as much as personal disappointment. Quite other is the task that belongs to *savants*. To them it falls to explain subjects, to define dates, to distinguish styles, to fix attributes. This task demands so much learning, and such lengthy researches, that it seems difficult, especially at the present day, to be both a great *savant* and a great connoisseur —to excel at once in the region of erudition and in that of sentiment. The best that both connoisseurs and *savants* can do, is to remain each in his sphere, living on good terms, and enlightening each other by wise counsels.

P.S. — While correcting the final proofs of this article, the last of the interesting series of the 'Memories of an Old Collector,' I received the sad news of the death of Count Michael Tyszkiewicz, which occurred in Rome, November 18, 1897. I may be allowed to add my tribute to the charming man,

BRONZE MIRROR

Tyskiewicz Collection : now in British Museum.
Game of Backgammon (*duodecim scripta*).

the amateur full of taste and of unerring judgment, who put together for our review a thousand instructive and amusing stories, which will never want for readers. The memory of Count Tyszkiewicz will live in these fascinating pages, even when his collection is dispersed. In them he has given us the best of himself: his long experience, his passion for beautiful things, his delicate instinct for style, and also the urbanity and good fellowship which rendered intercourse with the friend we have lost so especially delightful.

S. R.

The translator owes to Mr. A. S. Murray, of the British Museum, the following notes on the *Old Collector*, and also much help in the choice of the illustrations :

It is a common saying that while collectors of antiquities must die, museums live on and can bide their time. So it has happened in the case of

the late Count Tyszkiewicz. His antiquities were sold in Paris last June, and a fair share of them have found their way into public institutions, including the British Museum, which on the whole has gained by waiting—in one instance materially so.

At the sale there was an event quite worthy of the late Count's methods. His collection of cameos and other gems, forming only quite a small series, was put up *en bloc* with an enormous bid of 4,000*l.* to begin with, the bidder being understood to be the Emperor of Russia. Naturally there was consternation among collectors at such an offer. After some delay, and one or two advances on this sum, the gems ultimately fell to a brotherhood of Americans who have been residing in this country for a number of years. Possibly the gems will in due time appear in the Museum of Boston beside certain Greek vases which once were the ornament of the Count's rooms in Rome, close to the Pincian, and are now in Boston.

These American gentlemen have been trained in the Tyszkiewicz school. They know a good thing when they see it, and are prepared to pay down a big price. But they do not always succeed. They were very near getting the silver treasure of Bosco Reale. They had in fact purchased two of the smaller specimens, which they afterwards presented to the Louvre, just as the British Museum purchased from the

same find the beautiful silver bust of the Empress Antonia.

Among the purchases made by the British Museum are a handsome gold crown of Greek workmanship, two Greek painted vases of the best age, and several bronzes, among which is a mirror having an incised design of a youth and maiden seated at a backgammon board (*duodecim scripta* was the Latin name), she remarking, 'I shall conquer you' (*devincam ted*), and he replying, 'I think so' (*opinor*).

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SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
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